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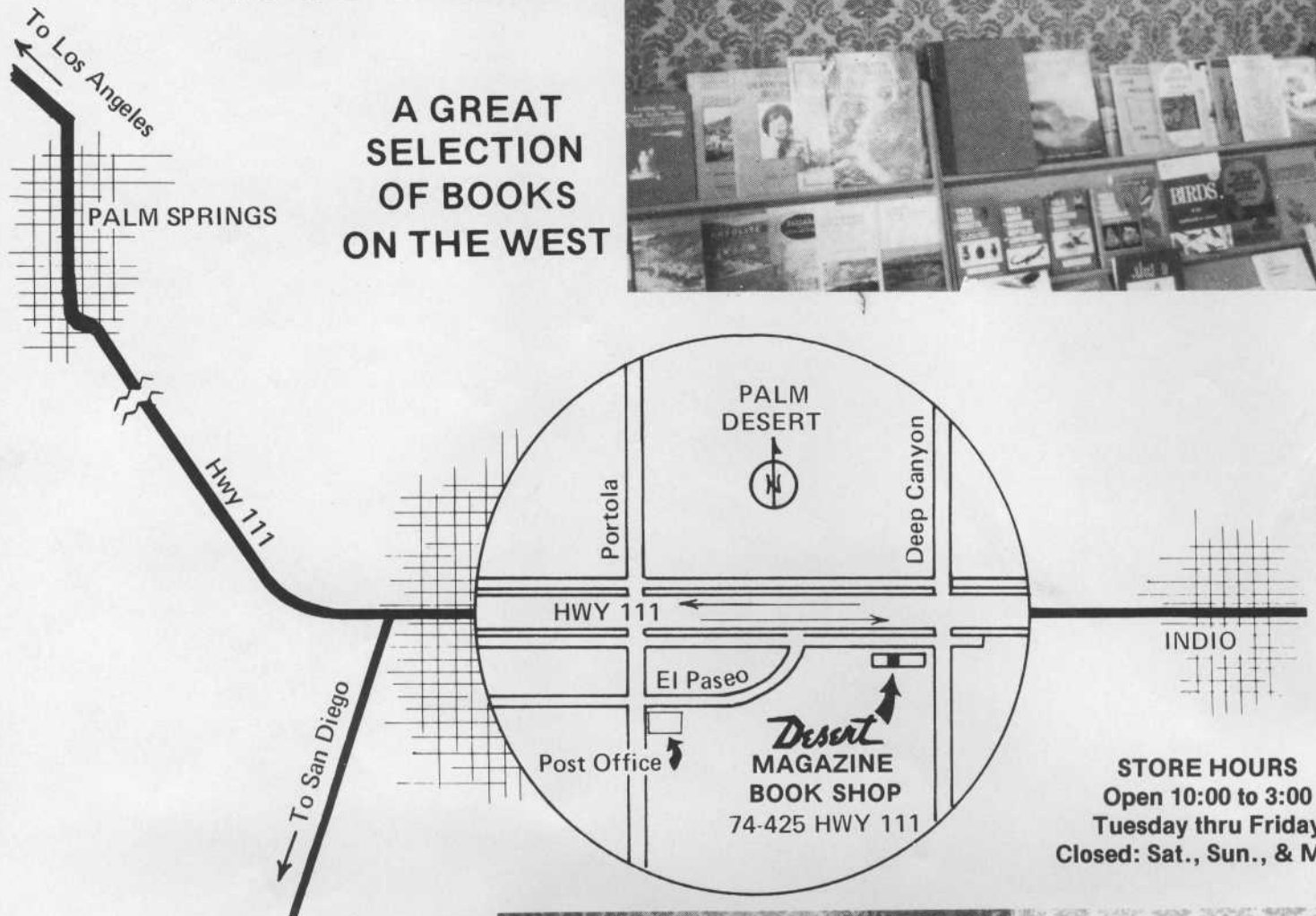
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THE COVER:
The coyote, center of a controversy. Photo by George Service, Palm Desert, Calif. See article Page 16.

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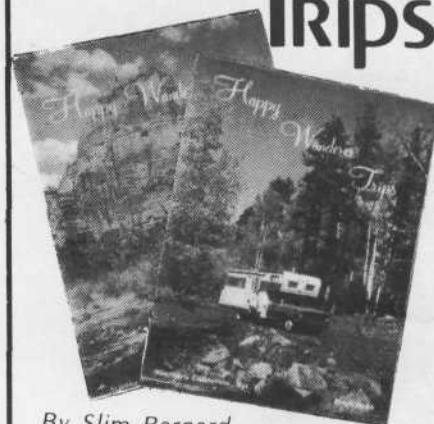
MUCH HAS been written in the pages of *Desert Magazine* on the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad. The rise and decline of the railroad has been fuel for authors for many stories. Few, however, were written by someone who was there! Author R. M. Lowe, of Snyder, Oklahoma, was just a youngster in his late teens when he wore many hats as he operated the T&T's depot at Silver Lake, California. Take a walk down Memory Lane as he tells about "The Old Borax Hauler."

Also, in this issue, lost mine buffs will enjoy Harold O. Weight's second fascinating article on the final days of prospector George Lee and his efforts to determine just where the Lost Lee is really located.

Everyone loves the Roadrunner, and the Coyote is just a poor second. But, honestly, that cover shot by George Service has to win over a few hearts. That's just the start as Thomas Jenkins updates the trials and travails of this desert favorite. Seen in ever-decreasing numbers in the low desert, they are scurrying into the hills ahead of the developers.

Rockhounds will want to take note of Dorothy Robertson's article this month on a trip to Nevada's northwest "Little High Rock County." Beautiful scenery, plus choice specimens—a good combination. Roger Mitchell takes us to Muley Twist Canyon in Utah; Barbara Bigham tells us about the unusual boojum of Baja California; Stella Hughes tempts us with her tantalizing corn bread recipes; Dick Bloomquist visits the North Grove of Mountain Palm Springs in his Oases Series; Bill Jennings reminisces about "Desert Steve" Ragsdale, a colorful "town founder," and to balance things up we added a dash of archeology from the La Brea Fossil Site in Los Angeles.

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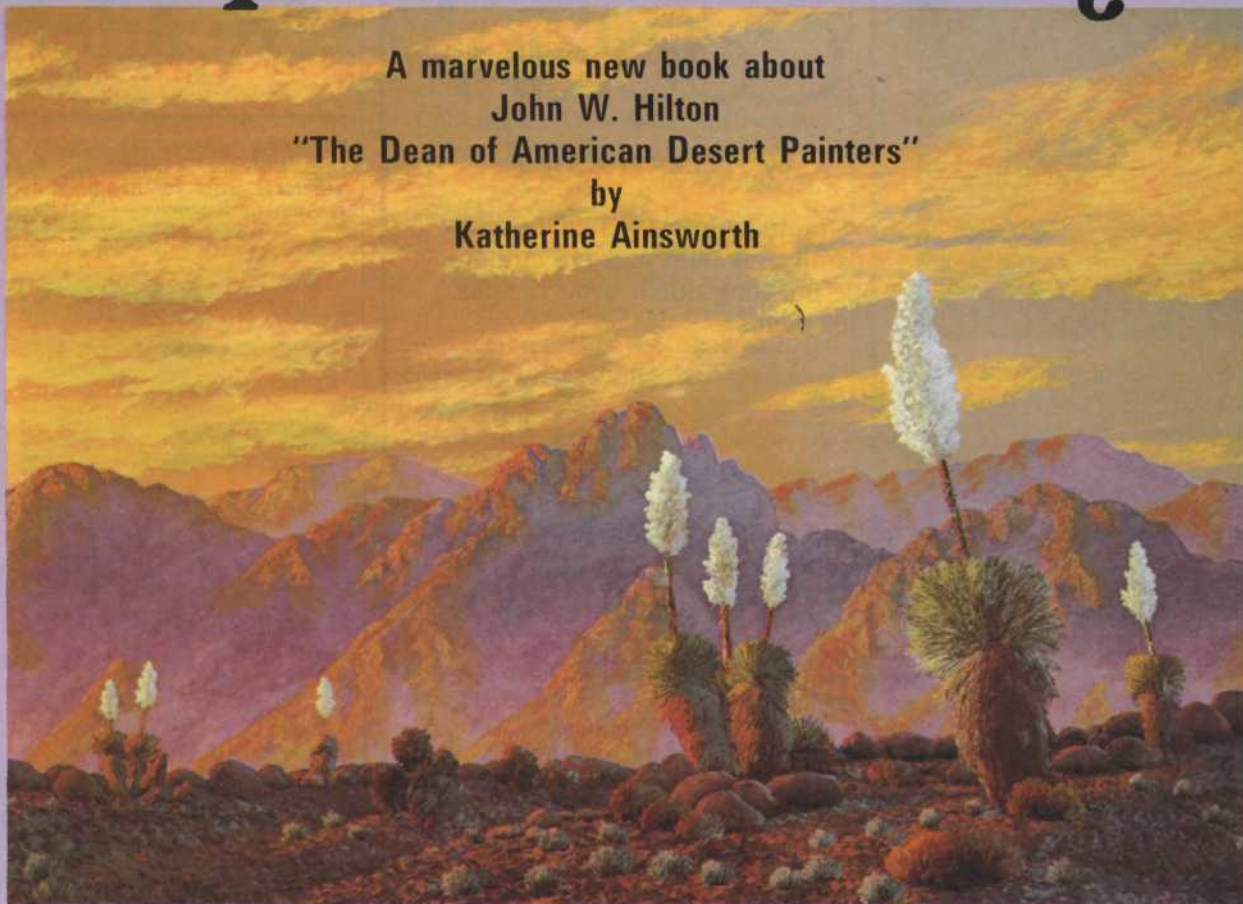
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The Man Who Captured Sunshine is inspirational . . . a book which inspires one to overcome adversity, to achieve excellence, to strive for a genuine joy of living. The reader will cry, but more often will find himself/herself enjoying the pleasure of hearty laughter, of grand adventure. The significance of this book, above all else, lies in an impelling force which inspires the reader to live a fuller, more meaningful, more joyous life . . . to be a doer, a creator, a giver.

The author, Katherine Ainsworth, makes no apology for the "lack of objectivity" in writing this book . . . she has been a friend and admirer of John Hilton for over thirty years. Katie's late husband, Ed Ainsworth, was John Hilton's best friend for almost as many years. This "labor of love" has resulted in a magnificent book about a magnificent man.

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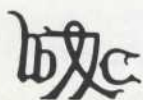
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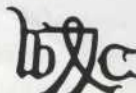
Like much of Western history, Telluride's melodramatic character emerges from the exaggerated scale of people and events that made up its day. Here were men blasting a railroad out of solid rock, Big Billy the kindhearted madam, a world's first in power generation, a strike that angered the nation, and a daring bank robbery by a kid named Butch Cassidy and a group called the Wild Bunch. Telluride has not become a museum. Telluride today is very much alive, and as fine a living reminder of the Old West as one can find.



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Books for Desert Readers

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ALIVE IN THE DESERT

The Complete Guide for Desert Recreation and Survival

By Joe Kraus

You're probably saying "we sure don't need another desert survival guide," but we say, wrong, you can always pick up something new, perhaps a lifesaver, from each new guide.

The advantage of this book compared to some others around is that it was written by a professional writer as well as a person who lived—and still does—in the desert, in the Coachella and Antelope valleys, where many of our rescues take place.

Kraus has enlisted the assistance of the High Desert Rangers, a search and rescue team from Lancaster in the Antelope Valley, in his text, and particularly in his well-chosen and posed photographs of rescue situations.

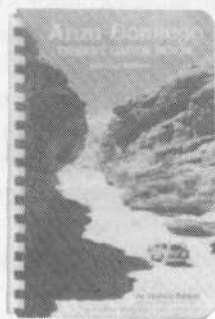
He lists essential supplies that any desert hiker should carry, whether he is a backpacker or a car traveler. Foremost, of course is water. Kraus suggests a gallon per person, for each day you plan to be in the field. This works two ways. Water can save your life and a gallon weighs more than eight pounds, so you

won't plan on too long a trip if you figure the weight you have to tote.

And, Kraus points out, a little elementary map reading and compass orientation will get you a long ways, out and back. Topo maps are a necessity for any trip.

Perhaps even more important, be sure to tell someone where you're headed and approximately how long you expect to be out there. And, be certain to notify the appropriate authority—park ranger, deputy sheriff or your trusted friend when you return so there isn't a wasted search mounted.

Well, for more, try reading Kraus' book, a paperback, 113 pages, many photographs, \$5.95.



**ANZA-BORREGO
DESERT GUIDE BOOK**
Southern California's Last Frontier

By Horace Parker
Revised by George and Jean Leetch

A Southern California classic has been reissued under the auspices of the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association, updated and improved by the senior ranger of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and his wife, George and Jean Leetch.

The original guide book, written and published in 1957 by the late Dr. Horace Parker, has now been through four editions and should regain the popularity it

received instantly when first published by the Balboa Island veterinarian, the huge park's best friend in many ways.

When compared to the original, the current edition has a strong family resemblance, with the addition of many new photographs and revised text covering newer areas of the huge park. Much of the original material has been retained intact, even the first maps prepared by another veteran park ranger, Jack Welch.

Dedicated to Dr. Parker, the new edition has a lovely color photograph on the cover, taken by Paul Johnson, the park naturalist and has an introduction by Maurice (Bud) Getty, the current area manager of Anza-Borrego. Besides these two unofficial connections with the park, the guide book was published with the cooperation of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

Leetch has served two hitches in the park, the largest unit in the state system, and perhaps more than any other living person is the authority on its beauties, mysteries and hidden corners. All are covered thoroughly.

The book has another advantage. It is bound with the same "lay flat" plastic spine that proved so useful in the earlier editions. It will remain open to the page you want, valuable when you're driving down a wash and haven't time to find your place as you steer around the sand drifts and away from the rocks that lurk in the middle of the wash.

Welch's original maps have been revised and laid out in a more useful manner, so the binding doesn't obscure the print, a vital feature particularly for the first-time visitor.

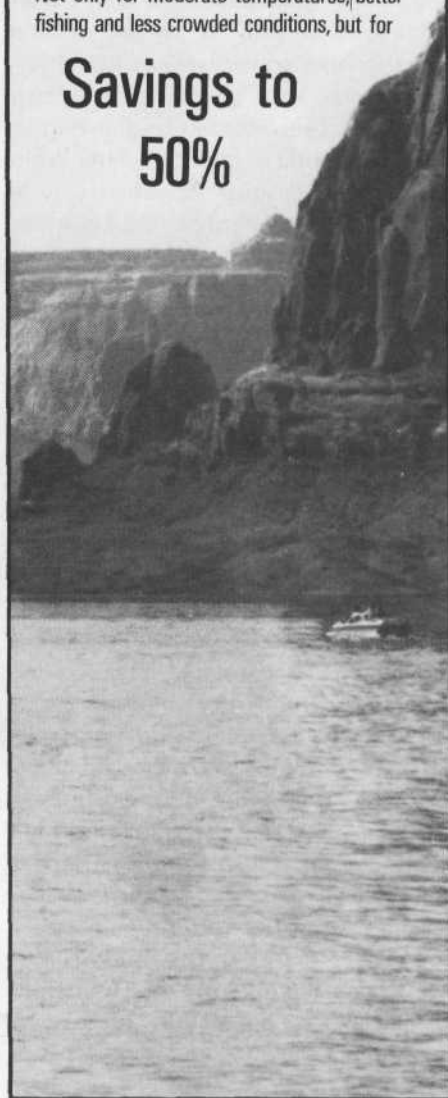
One of the most useful additions to this revision is a bibliography of selected desert texts. Another is the presence of the editors. Paperback, 154 pages, two maps, many photos, \$6.95.

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IN THE summer of 1879, prospector George Lee went into "the eastern Mojave," telling San Bernardino friends he intended to work a rich ledge he had discovered there.

He was never seen again. It was generally believed that he went east through Lucerne Valley, past Old Woman Springs, and into the area which soon would become the Dry Lake Mining District. But beyond Cajon Pass, his actual route is uncertain. He seems to have revealed his destination to no one. He left no known waybill. It is still debated whether his discovery was gold or silver.

On April, 1879, previous to his disappearance, Lee recorded in San Bernardino, California a claim called the White Metal, with location identified only as being five miles north of the Lone Star mine. Historian Burr Belden calculated that this would place Lee's claim about ten miles northeast of Baldwin Lake, in Bear Valley. The White Metal may or may not have been Lee's rich ledge.

These are the only reasonably certain facts that have come down to us about the Lost Lee. Yet there must have been convincing evidence in support of Lee's rich strike once. John A. Delameter, desert freighter and pioneer of Calico, declared that "thousands" —himself among them—had searched for it. John sometimes was expansive in his recollections, and for "thousands" perhaps we should read "hundreds."

There certainly were enough to demonstrate wide belief in the existence of the ledge then, and the search for it has continued since, across a wide stretch of the Mojave and from Lucerne Valley on the west to the Turtle Mountains on the east; from the Ord and Clipper Mountains in the north to Twentynine Palms on the south. With no success. No identifiable trace of the ledge has ever been confirmed. No trace of Lee found, either, that was accepted as legal evidence of his fate.

Most lost mine stories change greatly in their travels from mouth to mouth and writer to writer. The variations and permutations that the Lost Lee has suffered through the last hundred years should prove especially disconcerting to anyone who plans to acquire wealth by finding a lost mine.

John Delameter's account— part of a laboriously hand-written manuscript dated 1940, sixty years after Lee's disap-

THEY ALL LOST THE LOST LEE

by HAROLD O. WEIGHT

THE LAST OF A TWO-PART
TALE OF A LOST LEDGE
AND A DISAPPEARING
PROSPECTOR NAMED LEE

pearance—is a typically sketchy summary of the original story:

"A man by the name of Lee found a mine about four miles north of Barstow and called it the Pencil Lead mine. He evidently did not know what he had found for it was proven that what he called 'pencil lead' was horn silver and the mine was very rich in silver.

"Now Lee had another mine farther east called and recorded as the White Metal mine. This mine was supposed to be far the richest of the two. But as Lee was a very eccentric man and had lost some mines in the past by jumpers, he kept their locations as secret as possible. One day he was known to go out to the White Metal mine, but he never came back and the mine has never been found although searched for by thousands and your present writer among them."

Curiously, considering the excitement it stirred later, Lee's fabulous ledge was not even mentioned in first printed accounts of his disappearance and asserted death. The San Bernardino *Daily Times* story of April 6, 1880—claiming, without real evidence, that Lee had been killed by Chemehuevi Indians—stated that he had gone "to explore this unknown country." Not to work a claim he already had located.

"This unknown country" was the area east of Old Woman Springs. The men who made the alleged discovery of Lee's death site were from San Bernardino, and included John C. Reed, assayer, and Barney Carter, noted prospector who had made strikes at Gold Mountain in the San Bernardinos. They were on a prospecting trip. They knew Lee, and had followed what they believed were his tracks. They had found ledges they said assayed \$500 to \$1000 per ton. Does circumstantial evidence indicate they were hunting the unmentioned rich Lee ledge?

By January 14, 1882, the story of the Lost Lee was widely known. That date the San Bernardino *Index* said:

"There has been considerable rich rock brought in from the location supposed to be the same or nearly the same place that was discovered by Lee several years ago when he was lost on the desert. The location is a hundred and forty or fifty miles east of here. The ore is to all appearances the same as that found at Tombstone in the Toughnut and other mines there. If there is any differ-

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mine.' This mine he had worked, off and on, for several years, often laboring by himself, but sometimes employing others to aid him . . . This mine was situated in the desert, near what is now known as Waterman.

"In August, 1879, Lee started on one of his trips to his mines. A. Alexander, with his team, conveyed Lee and his outfit through the Cajon Pass and part of the way beyond, on the road toward this mine. From this point Lee proceeded along, on foot, and Alexander returned with his team.

"Lee never returned.

"After the appointed time for his return had passed, his friends, alarmed by his protracted absence, made inquiry and search for him, but no trace of him, alive, was ever discovered.

"The next year, 1880, R. W. Waterman proceeded to Lee's (Pencil Lead) mine, took possession of it, relocated it in his name, and has 'owned' it, or least held it, ever since.

"That mine made Waterman rich."

As a political weapon, the *Examiner* article fizzled miserably. Despite a largely Democratic sweep, Republican Waterman won easily, even outpolling by 10,000 votes the Democrat who was elected governor. Most of the charges made had been aired and answered years before. Title to the silver mine had been fought through the courts, even the California State Supreme Court, with Waterman winning every action.

But the *Examiner* article did create a state-wide interest in the Lost Lee, and in a way authenticated the missing ledge. Or at least the surge of lost mine hunters that followed thought so. It also made Waterman the improbable villain of many of the Lost Lee stories written since.

According to the *Examiner* and San Bernardino *Daily Times* stories, Lee made his desert expeditions on foot. Not only when prospecting, but even when he went to develop and work his claims. There is no mention of even pack animals. Neither is there an explanation of how he would carry the food, water, mining tools and supplies he would have needed.

The only person I ever knew who had personal recollection of George Lee and of the stories then circulating, Herman F. Mellen, said that Lee had a buckboard when he disappeared. In 1879 Mellen, a

boy of thirteen, was at Oro Grande on the Mojave River, helping his carpenter father. In 1882 and for some time after, they were in Calico, building tramways and ore bins.

"I remember Lee at Oro Grande," Mellen said, "telling the men what a fine mine he had down river near Grapevine. When he disappeared, he had not done his assessment work on it. When his filing ran out, Waterman relocated it.

"Lee met his end at Old Woman Springs. They found his team and outfit at the springs two days later. It was a buckboard. Old Woman Springs was then the end of navigation for wagons. Indians were around it. They used to take their old women out there and leave them to die. Some thought the Indians might have made way with Lee. But they would have taken his clothing, food—stuff they could use. Some thought Waterman did it to get possession of the mine, which supposedly was secret."

I didn't know enough about the Lost Lee then to ask questions I would now. Who found the buckboard? Two days after what? There is no known printed record of anyone finding anything known to be Lee's after his disappearance. Now, too, I recognize the partial confusion between the Pencil Lead and the lost ledge which complicates so many versions.

With or without reason, Old Woman Springs has been the focal point of the Lost Lee legend. And a brisk little prospecting rush developed in the nearby Dry Lake area at the time Lee disappeared. The Dry Lake Mining District, in fact, was organized on May 19, 1880, little more than a month after Lee's death there was asserted. The district, 10 by 20 miles, had one corner on Old Woman Springs. Twenty-five locations had been made some sixteen miles northeast of the springs by June 4. Lodes assaying from \$100 to \$1000 with some gold, and others from \$50 to \$600 in gold, assertedly had been found. Discoveries there, the San Bernardino *Valley Index* predicted, would help make the county "one of the largest bullion producers on the coast."

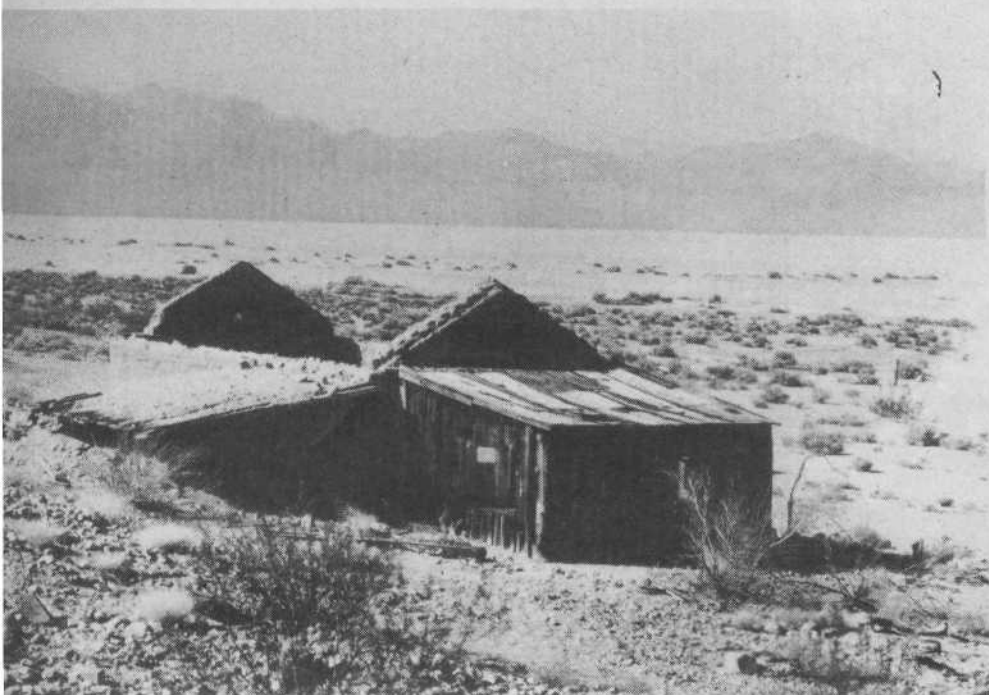
They didn't. But Calico may have been to blame. Within a year, that excitement was in full swing probably, as usual depopulating all surrounding districts. But mines opened in the Dry Lake District continued to operate until World War II.

Not all lost ledge hunts were confined to this region. There was the tale that Lee had a cabin near Aztec Spring in the Ord Mountains—which was blown up with him in it. And Burr Belden advanced one theory, in the *San Bernardino Sun*, which could move Lee's ledge to the Clipper Mountains, ninety miles east-southeast of Lee's Pencil Lead location. George Lee told the keepers of Grapevine and Fish Pond road stations, near his Pencil Lead, Belden said, that he was going out to work his Black Kettle claim. It was "in the eastern Mojave," too.

Belden then noted that there was no

corded a quartz location. He hired a man to help him, then sank a shaft, put up a windlass and built an arrastre. He made no effort to conceal the location, even inviting possible investors to come see his mine.

On one visit to town, Lee told the storekeeper he must hurry back. His helper was almost out of food. He left that night. Next morning his body, a bullet in the head, was found near San Bernardino. He had not been robbed. The killer was never discovered. The public administrator set out with a party to search for the mine and the helper. They did not find either.



Old ruin, now gone, marked site of Emerson mine mill in Dry Lake District. For several years Ames obtained his water from Emerson well at edge of dry lake. 1949 photo by Harold O. Weight.

great difference between cast iron black kettles and cast iron Dutch ovens of the period. Back in the 1890s, Tom Scofield is supposed to have followed an old trail into the Clippers and at its end found an old shaft and a tattered and abandoned prospector's camp—and a Dutch oven filled with mined gold. Once having left, he could not find it again. Could this lost Dutch Oven mine really have been George Lee's Black Kettle camp, Belden wondered.

Sometime in this century, the Lost Lee legend itself underwent drastic changes. In 1936 (Rufus Wilson: "Out of the West") a version went like this: One day Lee came into San Bernardino and re-

Wilson indicated the story came from a veteran prospector and Lost Lee hunter. Veteran prospector and Lost Lee hunter Amargosa Charley Gibbs was responsible for the next variation, in the *Twentynine Palms Desert Trail*, April 2, 1937. It followed the Wilson version closely—with two startling changes. George Lee had become Robert Lee, and his discovery of the ledge and his death (by being shot through the heart instead of the head) both were moved up into the 1890s.

Amargosa Charley said he had rediscovered the Lost Lee some twenty miles north of Twentynine Palms, which would

Continued on Page 38

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The Old Borax Hauler

by R. M. LOWE

THE CORPORATE name of "Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad" conjured up a railroad upon which gold and silver flowed from the hard rocks of Tonopah to the seething waters of the ocean. However, the name was a misnomer in that the line never reached the limits of either place, and from the day it started, its main cargo was borax.

After Francis Marion (Borax) Smith took over W. T. Coleman's borax properties, which included the Lila C mine, he turned his attention to some method of transporting his borax to the Pacific Coast. His first experiment was with a

steam traction engine pulling wagons of borax over a rock base road. The scheme fizzled, and Smith finally got it through his rather solid noggin that a railroad was the only practical way.

Upon considered advice from Senator Clark, Montana copper king and owner of the SP, LA&SL railroad (Pedro Line), Smith picked the small rail terminal of Las Vegas as the starting point for his rail line to the Lila C mine.

In early 1905, Smith's assistants, headed by John Ryan, established a tent headquarters at Las Vegas and began throwing up a roadbed for the new rail line. After about a month, men and horses had completed a nine mile grade. However, at this point, clouds began to gather over the scene when Clark be-

came suspicious of Smith's intentions. Big strikes at Tonopah and Goldfield gave Clark the idea that Smith was on his way to the new strikes, instead of the Lila C mine.

In order to discourage Smith, rates on Clark's road rose abruptly. When Smith found that the rate on 10,000 cross ties, from San Pedro to Las Vegas, had gone up to 45 cents per tie, he was astounded. Finally, when Smith could stand the pressure no longer, he pulled the pin on the project and moved his entire outfit, by wagon train, to the more friendly Santa Fe Railroad at Ludlow, California.

In November, 1905, Smith took aim again at his Lila C when the first rails of his T&T crawled slowly down the hill from Ludlow toward Silver Lake. Smith

and Clark tangled again over crossing the Pedro line at Crucero. Smith won the battle and continued building. Silver Lake was finally reached in March of 1906. It was obvious then that steel driving men would soon put an end to the "Twenty Mule Team" scenario forever.

Laying rails across the dry bed of Silver Lake was an error that would cost Smith plenty. To prove it, the tall San Bernardino Mountains shed a thick coat of snow in the spring that turned into a wall of boiling water as it rolled down the usually dry Mojave River bed. At Crucero, the water turned north, past Baker, and dumped its load into Silver Lake. T&T tracks were inundated for about seven miles.

Battling Smith got up again and started hauling train loads of rock to the lake in order to raise the track to what he thought would be above water level in flood times. It didn't work out—in 1916, old Big Bear called his hand again by sending an even bigger load of liquid down the tube. This time, water covered the track so deep that on several occasions it poured into locomotive fireboxes and stalled them. Wooden pilings, holding the Silver Lake depot fairly high off the ground, began to lean from pounding waves until they turned completely over, dumping the structure in several feet of mud and water. The old station agent escaped unhurt, but was heard to complain that the last time he

saw his chair cushion, it was sailing toward Avawatz Mountain.

Smith grudgingly gave up the lake route, and built a line on higher ground along the lake's east shore. Residences and business houses were skidded to a point near the new depot. Evidence of the old rock bed across the lake can be seen to this day, but being too rough to drive on, it's still as useless as the day it was built.

Laying track north, across hot sands of Dumont on to the mouth of Amargosa canyon, proved to be almost too much for man and horse. Instead of high water, the nemesis was now scalding heat. Finally, in June, all work had to be stopped until a crew of 95 Japanese laborers arrived from Los Angeles. After a few days, Roadmaster Ben Horton, checking on the new crew, found that out of the 95 men, only 27 were actually working. The others were spraying the working ones with whooshes of water from their mouths—Chinese laundry fashion.

Rock-walled Amargosa canyon was a hard one to crack, and Tecopa was not reached until May of 1907. In this welcome oasis of potable water and handy hot springs, a terminal was established.

When the line was finally completed to Death Valley Junction, in the fall of 1907, Smith lost no time and built a branch out to his Lila C mine. A shipment of borax went out on the new line

as soon as the last spike was driven. Borax Smith bristled, and then laughed at his completed dream.

After I learned telegraphy from my father, D. W. Lowe, who was agent at Tecopa for the T&T, I was ordered to Silver Lake in December of 1923 to take over that station from D. A. Gray, an old Spanish-American War veteran who had suffered a stroke while on duty.

In that little depot, which included my living quarters, I wore many hats, some of which proved almost too large for my 18-year-old swelled head. In addition to agent, I was the telegrapher-postmaster-weighmaster-water pumper-and express agent.

Silver Lake was on the main and only road between Yermo and the mining town of Goodsprings, and an important gasoline stop. My depot was the gas station. I'd measure out "Red Crown" gasoline in a one gallon can from a barrel, then pour and spill it into their tanks, at 30 cents per gallon. Windshield washing was taboo, because water was scarce, so I told them. My clientele averaged about four cars per day.

It was a big day for me when, in 1924, I received my appointment as postmaster, signed by President "Silent Cal" Coolidge—true to form, he was brief and to the point about it. I liked that job as postmaster, especially the reading of postcards in transit, and did all right until I took exception to one and answer-



Group of tourists with author, extreme right, in front of Baker's first garage, in late fall of 1924.

ed it. What transpired from there made me wish I'd never learned to read.

Little Silver Lake perked up quite a bit when Frank X. Hoveley established a store in one of our old buildings. It was handy for us, and didn't hurt Ralph's big store in Los Angeles one bit. Frank's young wife, Myrtle, and two babies filled a gap in our environment that was sorely needed. I had to laugh when some old cabin dwellers shaved for the first time in weeks, then pranced by the store like youngsters on their way to the post office. A woman in the town restricted our ways some, but it was worth it.

When a rumor circulated about town, in the summer of 1924, that a new highway through Baker was planned, and that Silver Lake would die on the vine, the old-timers just snorted and said, "There's a sand pit known as 'Cronise Valley' that will stop them. It always has—so forget it." They had to eat their words when, a few weeks later, we saw dust rising above busy machines near Baker. We learned that they had not only crossed Cronise, but were well on their way to Halloran Springs and Vegas.

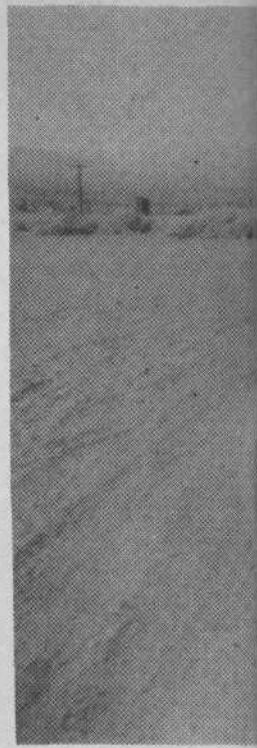
Frank believed the hand writing on the

wall by closing his store at Silver Lake, and moved to Baker where he built the first gas station, lunch room and garage. Sometime later, Fairbanks & Brown, from Shoshone, established businesses across the tracks from Frank's layout.

The area was jumping and I had to keep up with it. To start with, I stripped an old Model-T Ford down to its engine and frame, then added a Rajo head, Stromberg carburetor, bucket seat and two metal trunks. One trunk for grub, the other one I slept in when out on the prowl—sidewinders dictated that move. I like to think that old "sand-hog" was the forerunner of today's "dune-buggy."

Getting back to the railroad, the stable of T&T locomotives, at Ludlow, came in as many varieties as the famous 57 of pickles. However, they were well shopped, and when one of them went sour, Master Mechanic Jack Stalker and his hearties put it back in mint condition in no time. In my memory album, I can still see the grim visaged grandeur of a T&T locomotive leading a mixed train of borax, merchandise and people across aklali flats and into the restless sand dunes of Dumont. I can still hear the pur-

Author and passengers in his "Sand-Hog," early forerunner of modern-day dune buggy. Tonopah and Tidewater depot and post office at Silver Lake, California in 1924. Author, at 18 years of age, was youngest postmaster in the state.



poseful little steamer, fussing and blasting reverberating chunks from the walls of Amargosa canyon, and how melodious solos from its whistle sent curious coyotes scurrying from tall cliffs above. It was a train out of never, never land such as a little boy might draw with uncertain crayons in a nickle tablet; a drawing to be remembered, but impossible to duplicate.

T&T employees were Superintendent Wash Cahill's big family—he knew everyone of them—and they knew him. They gladly traded many days of honest sweat in order to keep things solvent, but in spite of their good motives, the little hauler never made a dime of profit during its life of 35 years. A sad and tearful group of employees watched it expire on July 18, 1942, when contractors Sharp & Fellows jerked up the last rail.

Now and then, when I wander among the mounds of rusted tin cans and piles of talc at Silver Lake, I can still see the old town as it was. Sometimes I seem to hear the drumbeat of marching feet—oldtimers that I knew, going about their work and using a unique brand of rhetoric, that if cut, would have bled. Like the little train, they dwell today in memory only.

The first tenant of this area, the ancient wind, in full charge now, may shift the desert sand as it will, but it will never blow away the dear memories of things that used to be. □



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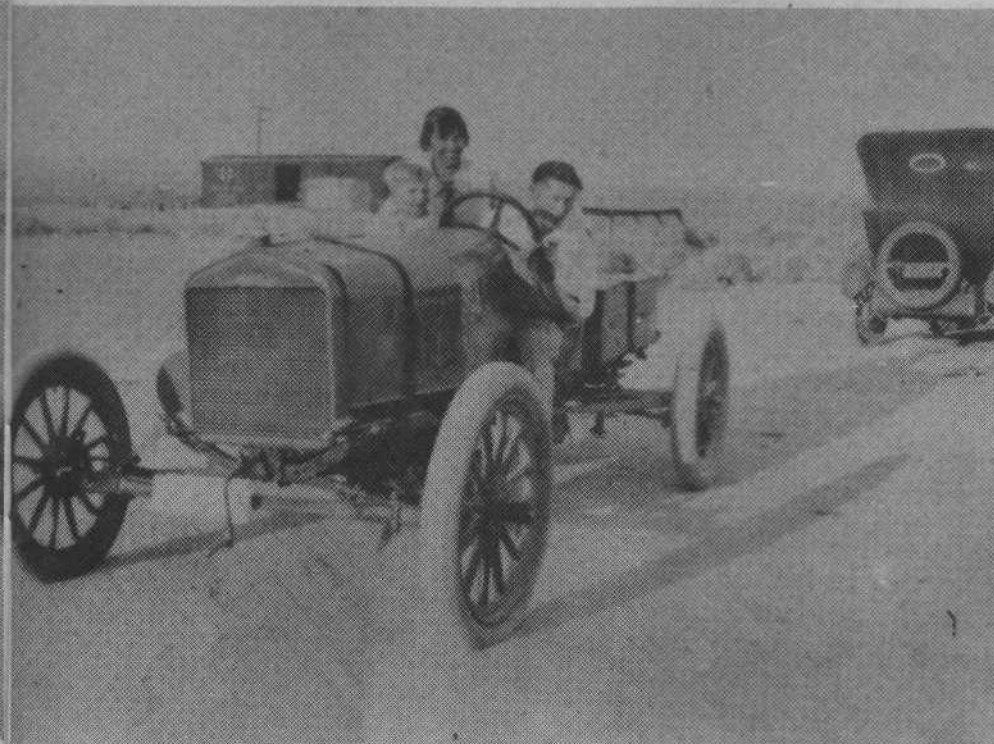


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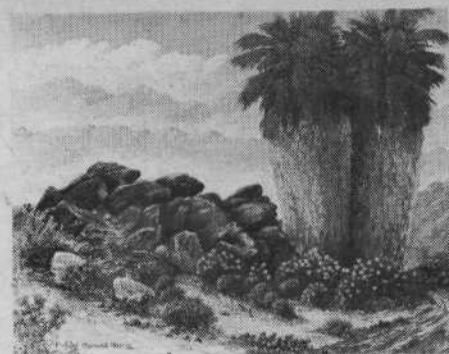
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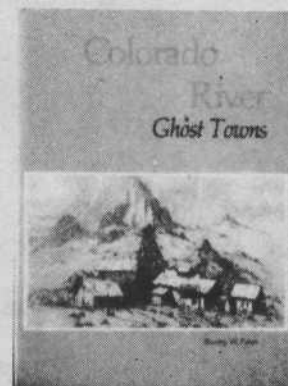
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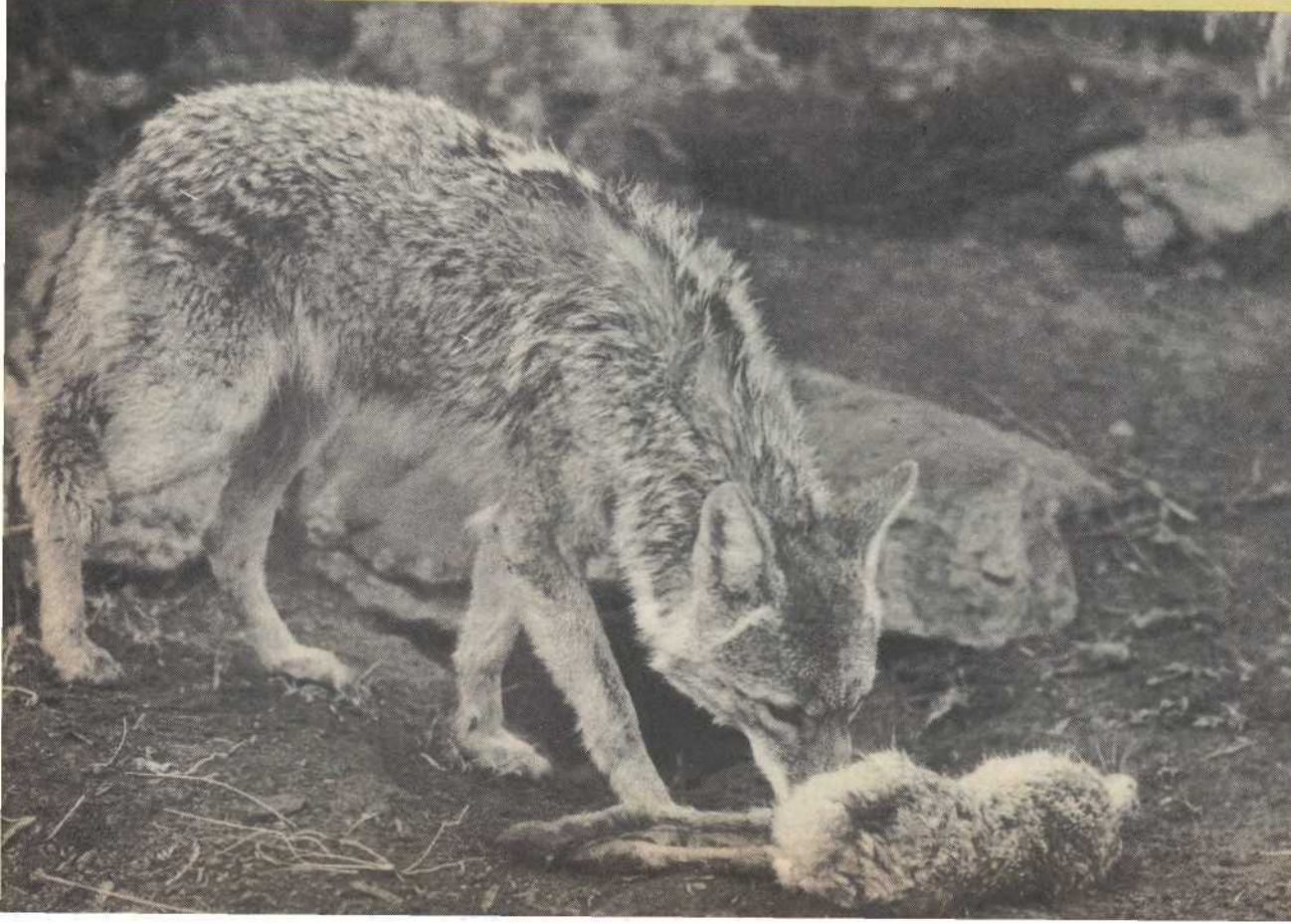
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THE CONTROVERSIAL PREDATOR

by THOMAS M. JENKINS

DEIFIED BY the ancient Aztecs, vilified by sheepmen, praised by wildlife biologists and depicted as a born loser to the stratagems of Walt Disney's roadrunner, this irrepressible predator is more maligned and misunderstood than ever before. Unlike the almost extinct American bison and the diminishing

wolf, the coyote adapted by meeting change with change: there are now over 1,000,000 coyotes living in the wild areas of western United States. A few are even prowling the alleys and brush pockets of Los Angeles, their howls blending with the concert music of the Hollywood Bowl, and early one morning recently, a



Coyote pups [above] near their den. Photo by George Service. A jackrabbit is delivered to the den [left] after a successful hunt. Photo by E. R. Kalmbach.



pack of four coyotes with two pups were seen strolling up Sunset Boulevard in Pacific Palisades. An old Indian legend seems to have predicted all this activity: it said that the coyote will be "the last animal on earth."

According to wildlife scientists, the coyote is an important link in the chain of predation. As a controller of range-destroying rodents, the coyote wins most of the awards, even outclassing owls, hawks and foxes as a skilled mouser, gobbling mice with as much ease and consistency as any animal on earth. Coyotes will follow elk herds waiting to pick off mice disturbed by their passing; they also follow harvest machines and sometimes snowplows. Coloradoan Louis Vidakovich says, "I like to watch them in the evening. They come down to the meadow and sit there, waiting for the mice to start coming through the grass. Then they pounce and whack down at the ground with their front feet until dark. Every pounce is a mouse." Likewise, they eat gophers and jack rabbits, their

principal non-vegetable food supply. Jack rabbits, in only a few nights, can denude a farmer's green field with the thoroughness of grasshoppers.

As a predator, the coyote serves another ecological function by helping to produce stronger game-animals such as antelope, deer, elk and moose by killing the weak, sick and aged, eliminating these inferior specimens from the breeding cycle. The wolf, with his superior size, had done a more intensive job, but predator control and inadequate adaptability have removed the American wolf almost entirely. The coyote, along with the rare cougar and less aggressive black bear, remain to carry out this task.

The classic example of ecological irony took place on the Kaibab Plateau in Arizona early in this century, an area set aside by President Theodore Roosevelt as a national game reserve. The crucial error was to allow predator controllers to kill over 4000 carnivores over a 20-year period, most of them coyotes. The deer on the plateau increased to about

100,000, among them inferior specimens, freaks and disease carriers. Eventually the entire herd died, leaving the area nearly stripped of forage, ravaged and desolate.

The opposite occurred in 326-square-mile Dinosaur National Monument in northeastern Utah, where coyotes have kept the deer herd strong and healthy by preying on weak fawns and yearlings, as well as large populations of rodents including muskrats, porcupines, marmots, beaver, prairie dogs, cottontails, hares, pack rats and shrews.

Not everyone understands the coyote's beneficial contribution to the biosphere (or agrees to this point of view). The bounty-hunter and the conservationist, the sheepman and the wildlife biologist, among others, are usually at odds and at war with one another. In particular, the sheepmen and the wildlife scientists continue to fight as epitomized by a superficial and distorted dichotomy of bumper-sticker assertions: "Eat lamb; 20 thousand coyotes can't be wrong." vs

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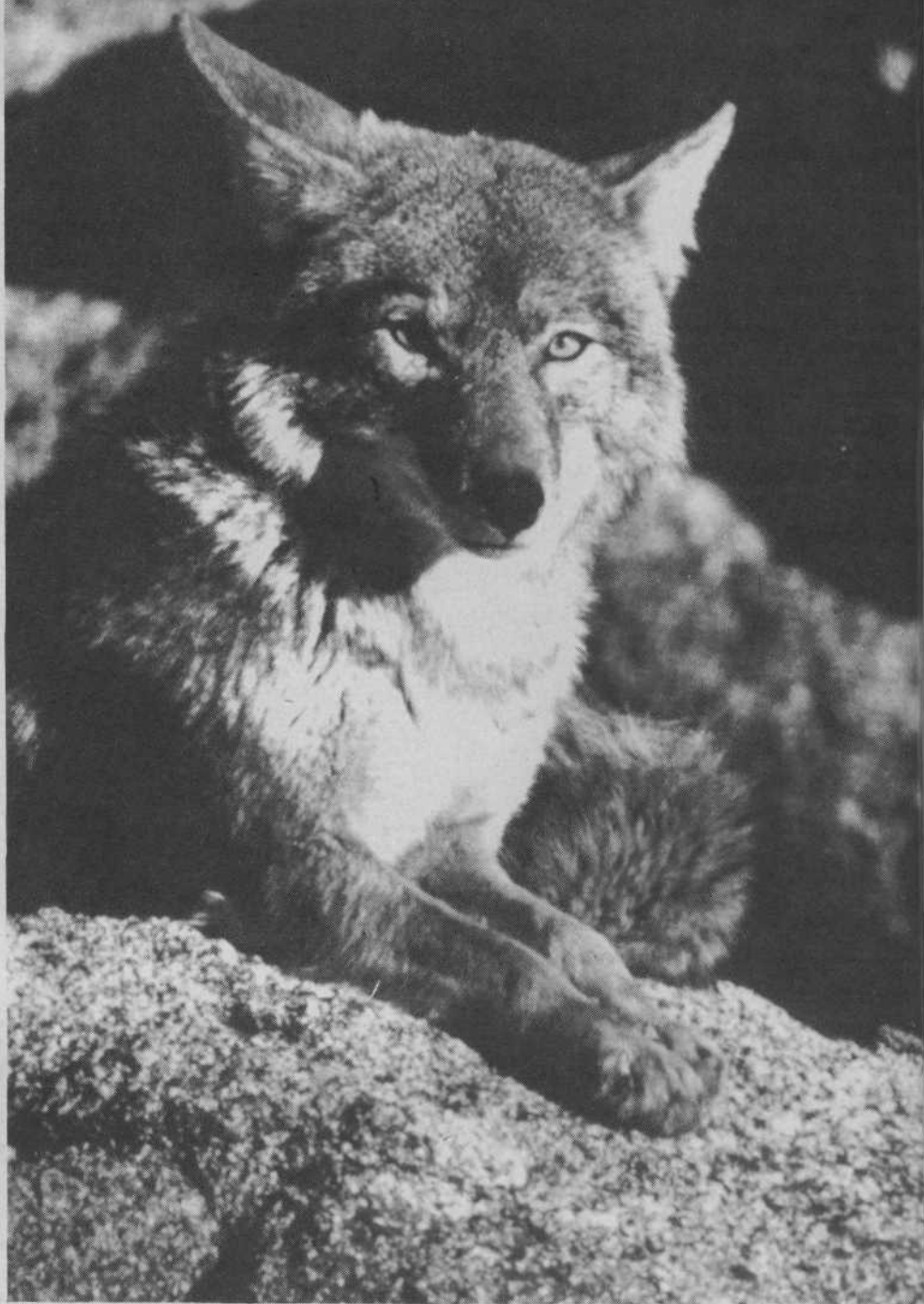
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Resting adult is caught by telephoto lens. Photo by George Service.

"Conserve coyotes; shoot a sheep-herder."

Sheepmen make provocative charges and present some alarming statistics. In 1942, there were 50 million sheep in this country; in 1974, the number had dropped to 14 million. The 1974-75 study of sheep predation on the Eight Mile Ranch located in western Montana was intended to observe coyote behavior in an area without predator control. Some observers claimed there was a sheep loss

as high as 16.9 percent, mostly by coyotes; moreover, they said that the prey was composed, not of the weak and sickly (as ecologists contend), but of the healthy and active sheep energetic enough to be on the periphery of the flock where they were more easily attacked.

Naturalists say that sheep predation is not the coyote's primary pattern of acquiring food, since under normal conditions, rodents are abundant. They admit,

however, that the coyote does indeed kill sheep during severe winters when carrion is unavailable.

Sheepmen, nevertheless, say that in 1974 in this country, 800,000 sheep were killed by coyotes, a total value of \$17,000,000. (This took place after the 1972 ban on the use of poison as a predator control.) They insist that predator control (particularly of the coyote) is essential to the protection of their flocks because sheep are "dumb," wander often, and are therefore easier to find and attack than the more alert wild rodents.

Over the years, the weapons of this desired predator control have been varied (guns, leg-hold traps, bait-exploding devices, as well as tracking and chasing with airplanes, helicopters and snow mobiles), but direct poisoning has been the most deadly and effective. Even emetic conditioning and anti-fertility chemicals were tried with limited success. Poison killed over 90,000 coyotes each year during the 60s, but when a Presidential order banned its use on all public lands in 1972 (with restrictions eased somewhat three years later), the sheepmen-conservationists feud intensified.

Despite the 1972 ban, hunters and trappers under federal sponsorship continued killing coyotes. Most animals, however, adjust their reproduction to environmental conditions: as animals are removed from a population, the remaining members find living easier with more available food, producing healthier litters. The coyote can withstand a loss up to 70 percent of its numbers and still produce abundantly enough to replace them.

Although agitated sheepmen and wildlife biologists argue over the coyote's worth as a predator, both confirm the coyote's undaunted and almost uncanny adaptability to all conditions. Predator control has been attempted for more than 100 years as western farmers and ranchers tried to exterminate coyotes. Millions of dollars have been spent on poison-bait programs, paid government trappers and hunters and expensive bounties; despite these extended efforts, the coyote's habitat now include forest, farm and wood lot as well as the prairie. He has not lost but has expanded his range.

This relatively small animal, weighing

*The wily coyote
peers down
from a rocky ledge.
Photo by E. P. Haddon.*

20-40 pounds and standing about 16-21 inches at the shoulders (western coyote) is found from South America to northern Alaska. Suspicious and opportunistic, the coyote learns from his mistakes and teaches its young not to make the same ones. His ingenuity and instinctive capacity to develop hunting and denning patterns give him what Alfred Etter called a "territorial imperative."

When a farmer, rancher or hunter fails to understand and honor a coyote's territory, he may cause more predation than he (thinks) he is preventing. Coyotes follow a runway or circuit in their area which includes trails, washes, ditch banks and old roads used throughout his lifetime, given sufficient food. The coyote's young are born and raised in the same area and will, in turn, learn the same secret places and paths, seasonal knowledge and location of prey from their parents. Only starvation or continued persecution cause the animal to forsake his territory.

A coyote "well-adjusted" to his territory has no need to attack sheep or game animals. His naturally-managed food supply is sufficient. Outsiders—knowingly or otherwise—who disturb the balanced life within the territory by killing the usually few coyotes living within its boundaries create a vacuum into which a greater number of "drifting" coyotes may be drawn, often to indiscriminately kill sheep or game. These intruders will not usually impose themselves upon an established territory if the resident, high-ranking coyotes are alive.

In his eloquent book, "Slaughter the Animals, Poison the Earth," Jack Olsen says, "By meddling in the coyote's territorial imperative, interrupting the normal processes of nature, the killers of coyotes appear to have created a self-perpetuating dynasty, where *the work they do is made necessary by the work they have done.*" No one has said it better.

The life cycle of the coyote is typical of nature's ultimately efficient system. The coyote's reproductive rate is usually low, with less than 50 percent of a litter (aver-



aging 7 to 10 pups) surviving the first winter. Coyotes are intensely protective, affectionate and devoted, with even unmated females protecting and feeding the pups of another female when the mother is absent. Despite these close relationships, there is fierce competition in a season when hunting is poor, with resulting high mortality. Fast growers, the young coyotes are soon capable of joining their parents in the hunt for small prey. Once the hardships of winter and the dangers of other predators during the first year have passed, the coyote's only real enemy is man.

Man's threats, however, are abundant. The guns, traps, poisons, hounds and cars are seemingly everywhere, but some coyotes survive the human gauntlet for 12 years or more until old age slows them down. Then weakened by the inability to feed fully, parasites or disease will inevitably take hold. The next winter the coyote will become too weak to hunt and eventually become food to his successor in the unyielding cycle of life-death. □



"Desert Steve" The Town Founder

by BILL JENNINGS

*"Desert Steve"
Ragsdale.*

NOT MANY people of the mid-20th Century have had the satisfaction of founding a town, but S. A. Ragsdale did, and more than one.

Desert Steve, as he was known more than a half century, died in May 1971, 88 years old, with not one place name but several to survive him. His primary monument is the Riverside County community of Desert Center, California, which he established on a 700-acre homestead in 1921.

Ironically, the community, still primarily owned by Ragsdale's Desert Center Service and Supply, Inc., has been bypassed by the national highway it was established to serve, U.S. 60. Unlike many such desert oases, however, Desert Center is still thriving. Not so the

other sites Ragsdale and his family created—Utopia, Cactus City and Hell.

Cactus City as a place name exists in the two state highway rest stops alongside Interstate 10 and as a pumping station on the Big Inch gas pipelines from Texas to the Los Angeles area.

Not so remembered are Utopia, near the Junction of I-10 and State Highway 195 about a dozen miles east of Cactus City, and Hell, which survived several highway improvements over the post World War II years but is now buried under the westbound lanes of I-10 about eight miles southeast of Desert Center.

A group of dying tamarisk and thriving palo verde trees and a few broken slabs of concrete still mark the site of Hell, which had the distinction of

carrying both the shortest and perhaps the most controversial of all place names along the major Los Angeles-Phoenix highway. To be sure, there are a few shorter place names in the southwestern Arizona and California deserts, particularly Ajo and Why, within a few miles of each other southwest of Tucson.

Hell was controversial in the precise way Ragsdale wanted it to be, so people would remember it, and him. A former protestant minister, the Kansas native sometimes jarred his companions, orally and in print, with his mild profanity, at least mild by today's standards. Some of his neighbors and friends objected to the naming of the gas station and garage for the Devil's country club but it never bothered Ragsdale.

High in the Santa Rosa Mountains, Steve is silhouetted above the desert he loved.

He came to the desert originally from Arkansas over a dogleg route and established a homestead farm in the Palo Verde Valley south of Blythe in 1909.

Ragsdale's version of how he moved to the mid-desert area used to vary at times, but consistently he alluded to crop failures and too-low prices for his products. "Went broke on seven-cent cotton" he once told Randall Henderson, a longtime friend and founder of *Desert Magazine*.

If you knew both men you might wonder at their strong bond. An unlikely pair, quiet and noisy with the only obvious link their mutual love and deep understanding of the desert, made permanent by long residency.

Henderson, a graduate of the University of Southern California's famed journalism school, went to Blythe during World War I as editor and printer for the old Blythe *Herald*, one of several weekly newspapers born, to thrive briefly and die painfully in the boom and boost times of the Palo Verde Valley.

Maybe they went busted at about the same time. Certainly, Henderson moved to Calxico to build up the Calxico *Chronicle*, another starving weekly, at about the same time the Ragsdale family moved out to Ford Dry Lake, to Old Man Gruendyke's homestead, and established the first mid-desert service station in the area, along the old Blythe-Mecca road, then a dirt track that meandered up Box Canyon, across Shaver Valley and Shaver Summit into the Palen Valley on its sandy way to Blythe.

Gruendyke, one of the desert's earliest homesteaders, has been lost to history, and the only first name or initials for him appears to be "Old Man."

That first stop didn't last long, and Mrs. Ragsdale and the first children of the couple followed faithfully. Soon the old road was rerouted some miles south of Ford Lake and Ragsdale wisely selected the site of present-day Desert Center for his permanent town. A wise choice, because during General George Patton's armored training center days early in World War II the oasis





Steve Ragsdale, Poet and Pioneer.



flourished and the Ragsdale family became surrogate kinfolks for thousands of homesick GIs, particularly Mother Lydia.

Then, however, the strong character of Ragsdale became famous. He refused to sell beer to the troops, or permit anyone else to do so at Desert Center. He once told Henderson he had been offered \$5,000 for the beer concession, even before the war.

"I turned it down because no person could afford to pay so high a price for the privilege of serving beer at Desert Center," he said. "I knew they intended to get their money back if they obtained a lease. I will not have any honkytonks at Desert Center, not at any price."

Henderson, in the same article, a comprehensive history of Desert Center and its founder, said Ragsdale had two vices, tall tales and bad poetry. In my limited acquaintance with the old boy, dating to my own early desert weekly newspaper days in Indio after World War II, I would have to add a few more, a sometimes terrible temper, intolerance on several subjects and a disregard of the working schedule for other people.

I ran into all three traits at the same time, when he visited the news depart-

ment of the *Old Date Palm* newspaper and used to harangue Editor Ole Nordland and myself, especially when I had the temerity to defend the New Deal and the liberal influences in the government.

But Steve had so many admirable sides you tended to forget the few faults. He was kind to his friends, went out of his way to help unlucky miners and reporters who might be a little shy in the desert lore department.

He built the Peg Leg Monument near Borrego Springs in 1949 because of a New Year's resolution he made during one of the early Peg Leg Liars Contest sessions, which used to be held on New year's Eve. His old sign survives, along with the pile, but the mail box and guest register long since disappeared. His sign reminds liars and all seekers for the Peg Leg lost gold lode to place 10 rocks on the pile before them embark, and many still do.

Ragsdale was a writer of prose, as well as doggerel, and one of the few stories that ever saw print was "My Friend, the Tortoise," which appeared in *Desert* in July 1939. Some of his poetry survives, too, in the form of old printed signs he used to post on the rough road leading to his Santa Rosa Mountain cabin.

The signs are collector's items of course, but part of the same legend still appears in fading print on a granite boulder along the Forest Service road to Santa Rosa and Toro.

"Santa Rosa Mountain — Desert Steve's Eighth Heaven—All Decent Folks Welcome. Enjoy, but Don't Destroy."

The poetry that followed was indeed terrible. Henderson, in a November, 1950 tribute, called Ragsdale "a courageous pioneer and the world's worst poet."

I can't buy that last part, because I've written some horrible stuff myself, but here's a sample from the Santa Rosa signs:

"If hungry then come to our house
made of logs

We will share our beans and also
our hog.

But don't shoot our deer or birds,
my friend,

If I catch you at it, I'll kick your
rear end."

There's more, before and after, but isn't that enough?

In his later years, Ragsdale spent most of his time in the Santa Rosas, while son Stanley took over at Desert Center. Son Thurmond operated Utopia for several years and more recently has been a resident of the Kaiser Steel mining town of Eagle Mountain, northwest of Desert Center.

Perhaps the most bizarre chapter in the long life saga of the Coffeyville, Kansas, native occurred in his declining years and after his death. The family became estranged and Steve was denied his wish for burial in the rocky tomb he had prepared years before in a spur of the Chuckwalla Mountains just south of Desert Center.

For years, before his removal to the Santa Rosas, Steve had maintained an old trailer in those hills where he did most of his writing and spent many days in solitude, alone with his sometimes bitter thoughts about the New Deal, the later-day vandalism and overcrowding of the desert.

After his death at Pinyon Flats—now called Pinyon Pines by its more sophisticated residents—burial was sought at the rocky eyrie above the Palen Valley. Riverside County regulations prevented this wish and Steve's last resting place became the shaded Coachella Valley

Cemetery, peaceful but not the same.

Steve's old friend, a fellow Palo Verde pioneer, County Coroner Ben White, had given oral permission for the private burial, but the combination of bureaucratic red tape, and family reluctance, combined to prevent Ragsdale's long-time wish. Despite his bad heart, constant care and instantly available oxygen in his succession of big Chrysler cars helped Steve outlast White.

Terry Low, who had been Desert Steve's secretary and general helper for more than 25 years, by her own statement, said his friends should not mourn his passing.

"A few days before his death," she wrote me in 1971, "Steve said, 'Terry, no one ever really ever dies, for he or she lives in the mind of others who have known them, for the principles they lived by, and what they have done. I have lived a long life; made many errors, but have always tried to do more good than harm.'"

Ironically, two old single blanket prospectors he had befriended in the early days, Gus Lederer and Tommy Jones, fared better after death than Ragsdale. He had buried both in rock-covered graves at Aztec Well, upstream from Corn Spring in the same Chuckwalla Mountains, and except for the predictable vandalism, their lonely graves are still out there.

I hate to repeat any more Ragsdale poetry, but perhaps his own epitaph should be memorialized, as follows:

DESERT STEVE

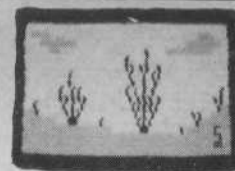
*Worked like hell to be
An Honest American citizen
Loved his fellow men
and served them
Hated Booze Guzzling
Hated War
Hated Dirty Deal
Hated Damn Fool Politicians.*

*Hopes a guy named Ragsdale
Will ever serve humanity
At Desert Center.*

*He dug his own grave.
Here are his bones.*

*I put this damn thing up
Before I kicked off.*

Nuff said—Steve.



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CHAPA

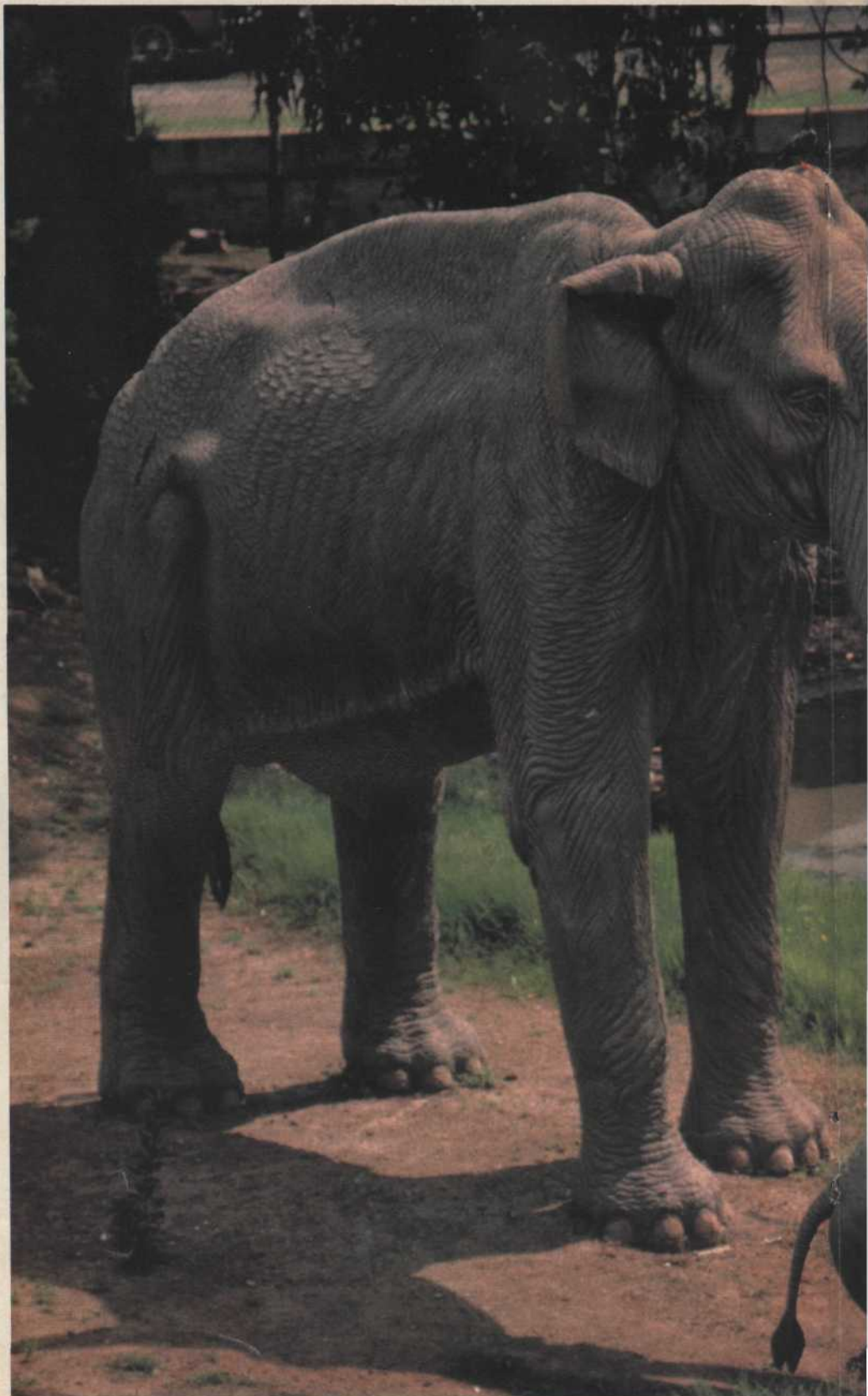
THE SHIMMERING heat waves blurred the horizon as the soldier squinted against the sun. Wiping the sweat from his brow with his sleeve, he tugged on the reins of his pack horse. His usual utterance about the animal's ancestry was strangely absent in the August heat. In fact, the entire company of the King's soldiers was unusually quiet as they trudged over the dusty trail.

It had been two days since the expedition had experienced a severe earthquake. The many aftershocks had made the animals uneasy and the religious Spaniards more respectful in their language. When the soldiers had joined Gaspar de Portola in his trek to Monterey they could not have imagined the strange sights and experiences that would greet them on the Los Angeles Plain. They had camped on the banks of the Santa Ana River the evening of the earthquake. When the main shock occurred men and horses were knocked to the ground. The river itself was thrown from its channel. Portola was so moved by the experience that he named the river "The River of the Sweetest Name of Jesus of the Earthquakes."

Riding at the head of the column Portola noticed the uneasiness of the men and animals. He glanced at Father Juan Crespi riding at his side. The friar was engrossed in jotting in his journal. "August 3, 1769," he wrote slowly, trying to avoid the uneven movement of his mount. A wisp of wind suddenly ruffled the pages in the journal. The friar's eyes met those of the expedition's leader in a silent communication. The two men turned in their saddles towards a now familiar sound approaching from the distant San Gabriel Range.

At first it sounded like distant thunder, but experience had made the men well aware of the approaching terror. The animals bolted as the soldiers struggled to control them as well as their own panic. The sound increased as it approached and the earth shuddered. As the trembling increased the men half fell — half knelt to the ground uttering long forgotten prayers of their childhood. The animals broke their restraints and ran with a stumbling gallop on the unsure footing. Then, as suddenly as it started, the trembler was over.

The expedition recovered the animals and continued across the dusty plain



APOTE

by ROY SALLS



with the men muttering about the value of such expeditions and their own sanity for becoming involved. Shortly after the aftershock they came upon another wonder of this strange land. They had entered an area of bubbling asphalt springs called "brea" by the Spanish. Crespi recorded the first account of Europeans sighting the famous La Brea Tar Pits. An entry in his journal described the sighting. "The 3rd (August 1769). We proceeded for three hours on a good road; to the right of it were extensive swamps of bitumen which is called "chapapote" (by the Indians). We debated whether this substance, which flows melted from underneath the earth, could occasion so many earthquakes."

Father Crespi thought the asphalt flows or tar seeps were volcanic in nature and the cause of the earthquakes. He was correct in making the relationship between earthquakes and the asphalt flows, but incorrect in determining their possible volcanic nature. The asphalt flows, known the world over as the La Brea Tar Pits, are the result of earth movement along the 6th Street Fault. The fault fractures an oil bearing layer of Mio-Pliocene age in what has become known as the Salt Lake Oil Field. The fault allows the asphalt to flow to the surface along the fault line by the aid of natural gas pressure.

What the explorers did not know was that below their feet were the remains of prehistoric animals that would make this site one of the most famous fossil localities in the world. Forty thousand years before Portola, great herds of wild animals ranged over the Los Angeles Plain. Camels, bison, mastodons, mammoths, ground sloths, lions, sabertooth cats, bears and antelope lived their lives near the Tar Pits, many becoming mired over countless years in what has been called "The Death Trap of the Ages."

Portola would have been amazed to see such an unfamiliar animal as a Ground Sloth mired in the asphalt, or at the sight of a prowling Sabertooth. However many of the animals would have been familiar. Such common animals as kangaroo rats, coyotes and grizzly bears were contemporary with the other large extinct animals and are found as fossils.

Mastodons, as they may have appeared.

Photos by C. B. Obara.



Similodon californicus [sabertooth cat] re-creation from La Brea fossils, life-size at Page Museum in Hancock Park, Los Angeles, California.

Today, as the result of 76 years of oil production from the Salt Lake Oil Field, the asphalt flow at the Tar Pits has been severely curtailed. In Portola's time, Indians were gathering the chapapote for many utilitarian uses. In fact, archaeological evidence indicates that man has been using the asphalt for over 8,000 years. Early settlers also saw the value of the product and quickly put it to use.

James Ohio Pattie, an early trapper, visited Los Angeles in 1828 and noted that the people roofed their houses with the asphalt from the Rancho La Brea land grant west of the pueblo. Pattie wrote, "The houses have flat roofs covered with bituminous pitch brought from a place within four miles of the town, where the article boils up from the earth. As the liquid rises, hollow bubbles like a shell of large size are formed. When they burst the noise is heard distinctly in the town. The large pieces thus separated (dried asphalt), are laid on the roof previously covered with earth through which the pitch cannot penetrate when it is rendered liquid again by the heat of the sun."

It is difficult to believe that one could hear the gas bubbles exploding four miles away in Los Angeles but people had difficulty believing Jim Bridger's stories of hot steam boiling from the ground in what was to become Yellowstone National Park. It may be that the removal of oil from the park has diminished the activity of the past.

Asphalt, brea, pitch, tar, bitumin or chapapote are all names used to describe the black oily residue of the La Brea Tar Pits. All the names are correct and the value of the substance in the history of Los Angeles has been overlooked by the historians. The original land grant of Rancho La Brea was given to Antonio Jose Rocha on April 8, 1828. The grant contained a stipulation that the people of Los Angeles had the right to enter upon the land with the unmo-lested right to carry away such brea as

they needed for the waterproofing of their adobe houses. This stipulation followed the land title through many owners into modern times. It is interesting to note that the asphalt deposit was also a mining claim. This gives rise to the unusual situation of the claim being the only one in California where any claim jumper could remove the "ore" legally!

The claim was an important commercial interest in Los Angeles until oil was discovered on the property in 1902. The dried asphalt was mined in slabs and melted down in vats. The rehardened tar was then transported to various locations by wagon. Many tons of the material were loaded on sailing ships at Santa Monica for transport to San Francisco. The early streets of the Bay City were paved with part of Los Angeles, the La Brea asphalt.

During the mining activity, miners discovered many animal bones. As they were constantly assisting the ranchers remove mired livestock from the tar pools they considered the bones the result of such entrapment. The bones, in reality fossils ranging up to 40,000 years in age, were tossed aside until there was a large accumulation. It was discovered that the bones would burn. An enter-



Harlan's ground sloth, one of the most common fossils from La Brea Fossil Site. Page Museum Exhibit.

prising miner engaged in an active sale of bone "firewood." Many stoves in Los Angeles were fired with the remains of prehistoric animals until their real nature was discovered.

Major Henry Hancock acquired the property and continued the mining activity. He gave several fossil bones, including a tooth of a sabertooth cat, to William Denton in 1875. Denton gave the first indication of the value of the fossil find. His discovery escaped the notice of the scientific community and it was not until oil was discovered on the property that official notice was made.

In 1905 two famous California geologists, W.W. Orcutt and Frank M. Anderson, made fossil collections on the Hancock property. The fossils were turned over to Dr. John C. Merriam of the University of California. Dr. Merriam noted the importance of the find and received permission from the Hancocks to excavate for fossils. The University of California, the Southern California Academy of Sciences, Occidental College, and the Los Angeles High School excavated between 1906 and 1913.

In 1913 Mr. G. Allan Hancock, owner of the Hancock Oil Company, gave the

The atrium area of the Page Museum of the La Brea Discoveries.

The fern forest is surrounded by fossil exhibits.



Los Angeles County Museum the exclusive right to excavate the property. The Museum excavated for three years completing the most extensive work ever conducted on the site. It took another 15 years to clean, catalog and store the 200 tons of fossil material found. At the conclusion of their work the museum had uncovered the largest collection of Ice Age fossils ever found. The discovery was so important to paleontology that La Brea was made a type locality for the latest part of the Pleistocene or Ice Age. Today, Rancholabrean is the term applied to all late Pleistocene fossils throughout North America.

G. Allan Hancock donated 23 acres of the most prolific fossil sites to the County of Los Angeles as an educational park in May 1915. Hancock Park, named after the donor, is located in Los Angeles at the corner of Wilshire and Ogden Drive in the heart of the Miracle Mile. In June 1969, a new excavation was started in the park and is open to the public view as well as seeking volunteers to assist in this search of the past. Two years ago (April 1977), through the efforts of the

industrialist George C. Page, the County Museum of Natural History was able to open the new George C. Page Museum at the site. This museum was the fulfillment of a dream of the Hancocks to see the fossils displayed on their original discovery site. Mr. Page spared nothing in obtaining the finest architects and exhibit designers for the museum. He has created the finest facility of its kind in the world.

As summer approaches the desert heat causes the search for cooler activities. The cool tropical atrium with its falling waters and shady walkways beckon to the Page Museum. The park and museum offers a day of relaxation in an educational setting. There are tours of the park grounds and the Museum. Two theatres show the La Brea Story and the Dinosaur theatre has a continuous program. Prehistoric animals come to life on the screen and through your guides, or you can wander slowly at your own pace in these pages of the past.

The museum is open daily except Monday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and admission to all attractions is free. □

The old Billy Denio Homestead, right, of the early 1900s, still stands intact. At right, center, is the bunkhouse where the posses from two states took turns trying to bed down from the killing snow and cold before setting out on the trail of renegade Shoshone Mike and his band.

Opposite page: Our friends Eva and Ken Jacobs, discuss with Al Robertson the possibility of getting into the canyon to view the massacre site when the way is barred by wall-to-wall water!

Northwestern Nevada's Historic Little High Rock Country

by DOROTHY ROBERTSON

WINTER IN northwestern Nevada is just too cold and windy for an exploring-for-fun trip. Conversely, summer months are much too hot. But both spring and autumn, say the months of May-June and mid-September-October are usually ideal prowling weather months.

This region is wide open sage, rabbit brush, buckbrush, juniper and pinyon pine country. Inhabited homesteads are rare; towns or hamlets are anywhere from 50 to 100 miles apart. So if you like to get away from elbow-to-elbow people, northwestern Nevada is for you!

We love exploring the unmade roads of this outback land. Most of these roads will accommodate the average automobile, but there is a good rule to follow in desert travel: Don't go exploring unknown country without adequate maps, water and gas, and, of course, take a leaf from old Noah's book—go two by two! Then if anything untoward should occur, the second vehicle can go for help.

While poking around this fascinating region we found three areas to be of particular interest. These are: Little High Rock Canyon, where a gruesome Indian

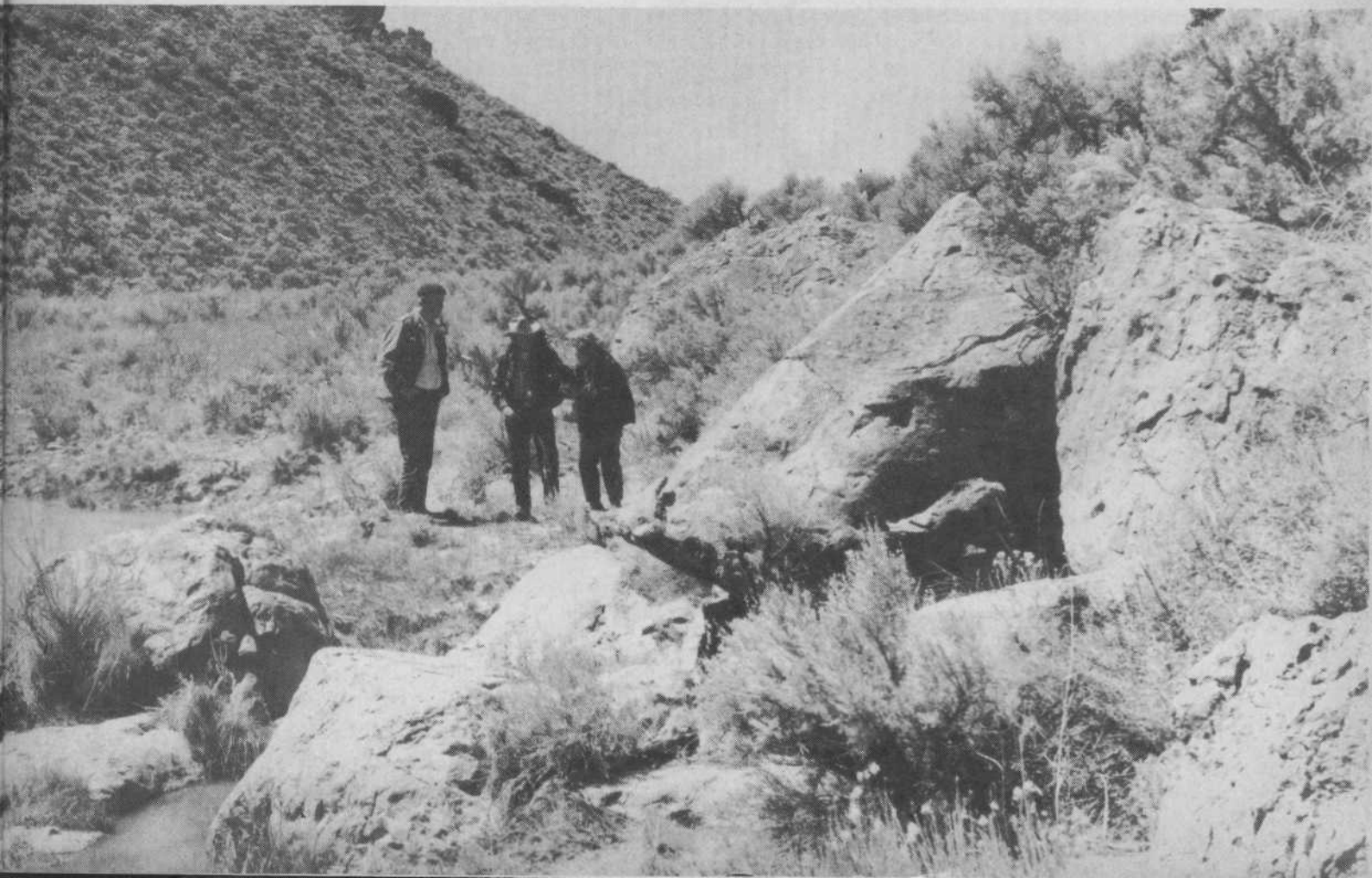




ambush and massacre of four Surprise Valley Basque ranchers (from nearby California) occurred back in 1911; Billy Denio's homestead which lies a few miles northward of the canyon, and site of the infuriated avenging posse that tracked down the Indians, and a knoll of pure opalite that lies between nearby Yellow Rock Canyon and Little High Rock Canyon.

Gerlach is the last gas and potable water stop for approximately the next 100 miles or so. Be sure you have enough of both to see you back to Gerlach, or west to the California line and the little town of Eagleville, on the other side of Forty-nine Pass. Sometimes called the Lonely Road—and for good reason—you could sit by the side of the highway all day without seeing another vehicle—so much for Route 34!

This whole area is Pioneer Country, even from before the days of '49, for this is the Lassen-Applegate Trail road. If you take the time to explore the north-western end of High Rock Canyon you can see the wagon ruts still embedded in the rocky terrain; see the large caves mentioned by the emigrants. Signs pointing directions and mileage are





Plaque set up at the mouth of Little High Rock Canyon, pointing the way to the actual massacre site.

placed along the highway. Here and there historical monuments and plaques appear.

We made our last trip out on Route 34 which junctioned with Route 8A at Vya—nothing there but an old building hous-

ing a one-time maintenance station, and turned due south, heading for adventure.

Approximately 23 miles south of the Vya junction a signpost on the east side of the highway designates Little Indian Springs: 3 Miles; Nellie Springs: 1 Mile;

Massacre Ranch 17 Miles, and Yellow Rock Canyon: 6 Miles. Follow the unmade road which winds around a low hill-slope to skirt a swampy area (in wet weather), then heads in a northeasterly direction. You will notice that en route there is quite a number of colorful Indian chippings to be seen here. This is the road to Yellow Rock Canyon, but at the road fork designating the Canyon road, turn right and follow the gentle rising slope for a couple of miles to a small knoll which you will see glistening in the sunlight. This is Opalite Hill!

The knoll lies to the left of the road—you can't miss it. The beautiful creamy opalescent vitreous-like material comes in shades of yellow, orange and various browns. The poorer pieces make gorgeous decorative garden rocks.

Since this is a hard material to mine, we just picked up small pieces that lay around. Fractures are conchoidal. Some pieces worked up into nice cabochons, larger chunks worked into nice spheres.

After backtracking to Highway 34, proceed south (left turn) for approximately 12 miles where a wide road leads east. Look to the skyline along the eastern hills, and you will notice a rugged, natural gateway-like silhouette. This is the landmark which is the entrance to Little High Rock Canyon. Fairly new redwood signs now point the way. A short drive leads to the canyon-mouth where the Northern California Cedarville Troop 53, BSA has placed a commemorative plaque showing directions and mileage to the actual site of the ambush-massacre of the four Basque ranchers. This is rough, rugged volcanic country!

When we were there, there had been heavy rains just a few days prior to our visit, and the creek that runs through the canyon was now wall-to-wall. We were unable to hike the two miles in to the actual massacre site, much to my disappointment, for I had been told that the Indians' teepee willow poles were still in upright position on their hidden camp-site.

Here, too, at the mouth of the canyon, there are many colorful Indian chippings



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On your way out again you will notice a rough road branching off in a due north direction. This roadway parallels Route 34, and between tall stands of sagebrush, you can glimpse the highway itself. This road leads to Billy Denio's homestead. (If the road hasn't been messed with, it is only a few miles to the old homestead.)

I noticed at the time that the old signpost was missing. Hopefully, a new one is now in place. In any case, you can't miss the homestead because it is at the end of the road which runs beside a fenced pasture, watered by springs—and Route 34 is on the other side.

It is thrilling to those of us who are his-

*Almost hidden mouth of Little High Rock
Canyon as seen from the access road in.
At a distance, the rugged rocks show
along the skyline as a sort of gate-way.*

tory buffs to stand on the site and recreate those olden days, back in 1911 when the old homestead was alive with buckeroos, lawmen and posses of avenging friends and relatives of the murdered men, as they milled around on their horses, getting ready to follow the Indians' trail. Even the old corral still stands, as does the old house and bunk-house out-buildings.

This high desert country of Route 34—the Lonely Road—is a fascinating place to visit. The air is sweet and fresh and smogless; the effluvia one of sage and pinyon and juniper, besides the ever-present rabbit brush. At night, the coyotes howl and deer and sage hens and chukar call. It is a place to visit and clear the cobwebs of city life from your mind—at least for a blissful few days! □



*The snark was a boojum, you see . . .
the boojum is a creature said to
live on distant, unfrequented desert
shores.*

Lewis Carroll,
"The Hunting of the Snark"

The Boojum of Baja

GILBERT SYKES had read Lewis Carroll's book, and when he saw the tall, skinny tree growing in the Mexican desert, he knew he had found the "creature" that Carroll had only imagined. "Ho, ho, a boojum, definitely a boojum!" he is said to have exclaimed.

Since that day in 1922, the boojum has had a name, but few people have ever caught a glimpse of them. They are rare—native only to a small area of Baja California, along a 275-mile stretch of desert between El Rosario and San Ignacio, and a small, isolated section of the Sonoran coast between Puerto Libertad and Desemboque.

Until recently, the only access to the

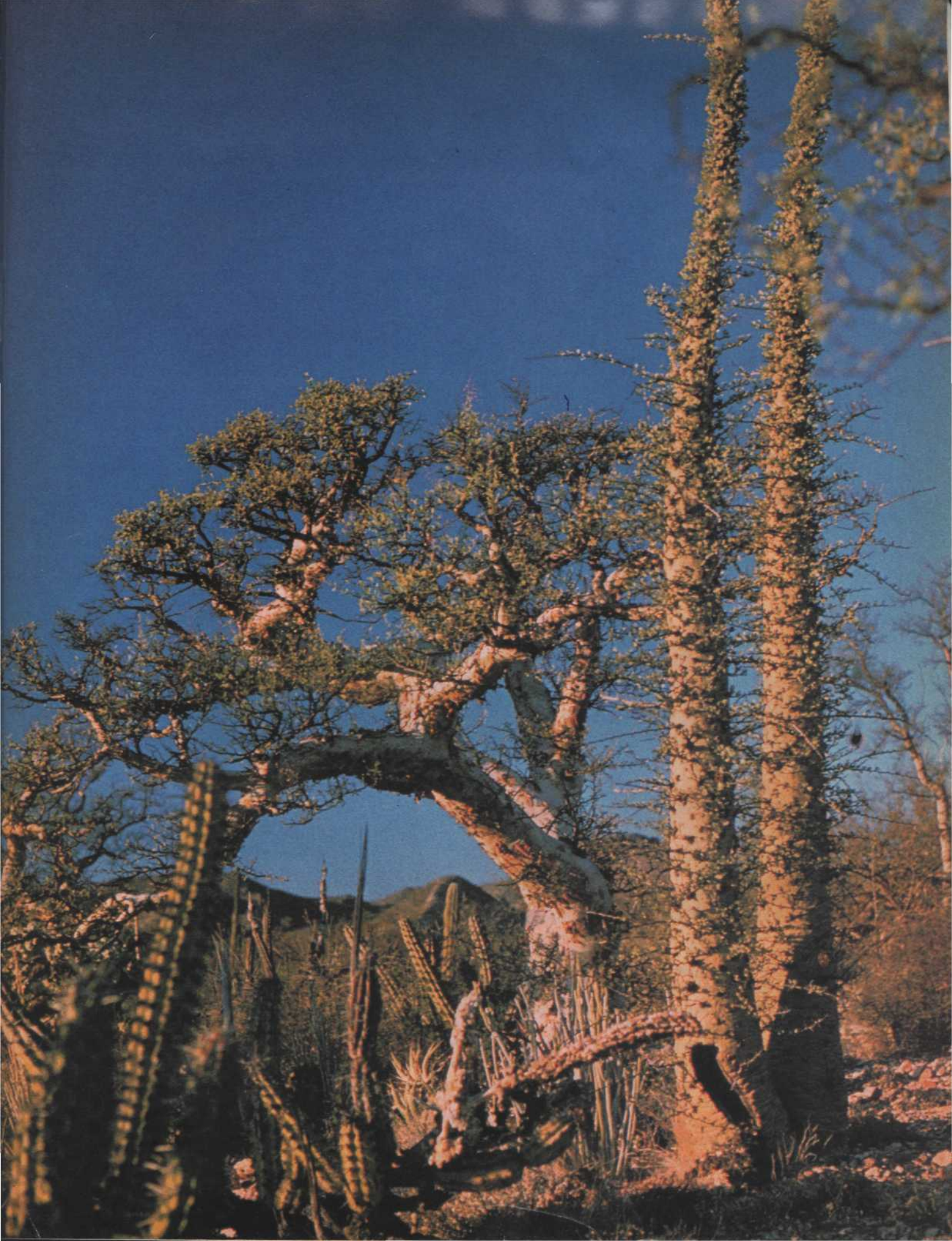
boojum-forest was a road that had been described as "two cow trails which sometimes run a parallel course." Difficult even for well-equipped four-wheel-drive vehicles, the road was nearly impossible for ordinary passenger cars. About the only people who managed to trek far enough to see the boojum were hardy campers or curious botanists.

For those who made the trip, the sight of the tree was worth the trouble. One researcher told of his journey: "It was a long half-day's journey beyond El Rosario before we spotted our first boojum trees . . . It was a worthwhile, indeed memorable, experience."

Young boojums are little more than a

by BARBARA BIGHAM

*Strange appearing cirio columnaris
or boojum with various flora
forms that make Baja a botanist's eden.
Photo by George Service.*





The boojum seems to grow wildly in all directions!

prickly ball, fat and covered with greyish bark and spiny twigs which protect them from predators. They grow slowly, elongating and tapering off to a point until they look like an upside down carrot. During the rainy season they may "spurt" up a fraction of an inch, but during the dry season they hardly grow at all. One cultivated specimen was measured periodically and after 25 years, it had grown only 10 inches in height, and two inches around its base. A boojum

can grow to well over 50 feet, and although they have no tree rings, their size indicates that they can easily be 500 to 700 years old.

The dry desert of Baja often goes up to two years without rain, and the boojum, like other desert plants, survive by soaking up a reservoir of water in its pulpy trunk. During a wet spell, the boojum will sprout leaves and even flower, but within weeks, the blades of the leaves drop off to conserve water loss. The

stalks of the leaves harden to form spiny twigs. Most of the year, the boojum tree doesn't resemble a tree at all. Its long, tapering body is covered with leafless twigs and spines that create a weird appearance.

Adding to the oddness of the boojum is the fact that few of them grow straight upwards. Many twist into seemingly impossible contortions, as if they'd lost all sense of direction. They curve in lazy loops and even arch down to earth again, sinking their "heads" into the ground to form what environmentalist Joseph Wood Krutch described as a "gateway into a wizard's garden."

After seeing some of these astonishing trees, Krutch noted that, "Doubtless God could have made a queerer tree . . . but if He did, I have never heard of it."

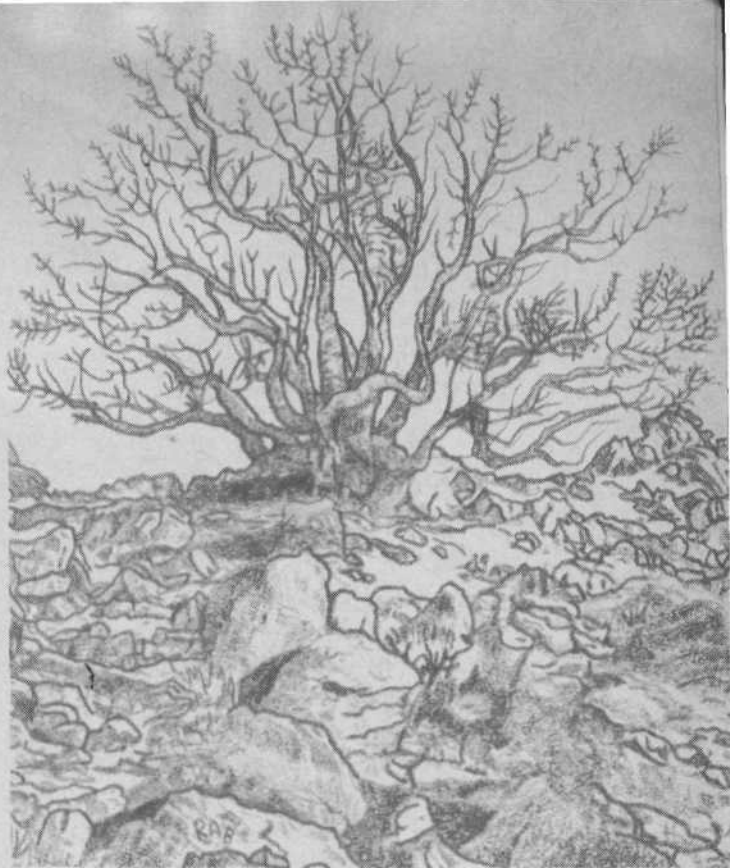
As comical as the boojum may seem, there is a sadness in their scarcity. So rare are they that botanists have put them in a class by themselves—they are the only species in the genus *Idris Columnaris*. And even their native range, so limited to begin with, is shrinking. They are falling prey to natural enemies such as the lichen, as well as sightseers who uproot them as curiosities and smuggle them into the United States. Local farmers often receive a large part of their income from "harvesting" boojums which have become infested with bees. A single boojum hive can contain up to 100 pounds of honey.

The Mexican government has already taken steps to protect the boojum and their Baja companions. A system of *elijos* programs encourage the cooperative development of public land in Baja by groups of farmers and ranchers. Anyone who removes plants, timber or even rocks from the public land must have the permission of the local *elijos* or risk a stiff jail sentence.

Although the new, paved Baja highway makes travel there less difficult than before, there are several adopted boojum trees being cultivated in the United States. For a look at these oddballs of the plant world, stop by the Desert Botanical Gardens in Phoenix, the Boyce Thompson Arboretum in Superior, Arizona, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum in Tucson, or the Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California. They, as well as other desert botanical gardens have several examples of the boojum of Baja. □

Mountain Palm Springs: North Grove

by DICK BLOOMQUIST



*Pencil sketch
by author.*

NOW BACK at Mountain Palm Springs Primitive Camp after having visited the Pygmy and Southwest groves, we head up the mesquite-dotted ravine entering the campground from the right. Mesquite is a yellow-flowered member of the pea family which denotes the presence of moisture relatively close to the surface. Just as the iceberg conceals most of its bulk beneath the sea, so the mesquite sometimes hides the greater part of its mass beneath the sand as roots descend to depths of up to 60 feet in search of water. The seeds and their pods were a staple Indian food. Desert holly, a low-growing, silver-leaved shrub, also does well here, and is joined on the slopes by barrel cactus, cholla and ocotillo.

Blanched boulders stud the arroyo floor, but give way on the hillsides to rocks coated with the familiar umber tints of desert varnish. Oxides of manganese (black in color) and iron (red) make up most of this "varnish," common on mineral surfaces in lands of heat and little rain. Small quantities of water from what rain does fall move upward through the rocks by capillary action and deposit the solution oxides on the sun-struck surfaces.

After a quarter of a mile or so, Surprise Canyon, its mouth encumbered by boulders, enters on the left. On our next two field trips we'll thread this water-course for a look at its own Washingtonias and those at Palm Bowl beyond. For

now, however, our trail runs straight ahead to Mary's Grove, a trim little colony of 35 trees. This oasis is divided into two sections: a smaller one to the left (which remains hidden until the last moment) and a larger one to the right (which can be seen from the campground). At first glance the arroyo appears to end at the right-hand group, but

wash suddenly spreads out into the mountain hollow which harbors the North Grove.

The availability of water has caused the palms to grow in virtually a straight line along the far side of the hollow. Damp or muddy soil near some of the trees and a water-filled cavity pawed out by an animal indicate how very close this moisture is to the surface. As is the case with many other alkaline desert oases, the seepage could be drunk in an emergency by humans, despite its bitterness and probable laxative effect.

At the North Grove, 19 dignified veterans watch over a large brood of 70 or 75 younger trees, approximately 40 of which are less than six feet tall. Fire has not seared the oasis in recent years, and full skirts adorn all but a handful of the Washingtonias.

A robust elephant tree about ten feet tall, its numerous fleshy limbs contorted like octopus tentacles, strikes its roots on the slope south of the grove. The branches gave off a spicy aroma when I brushed against them. With its purplish-blue berries, red sap and twisted trunk and limbs, the elephant tree offers an extraordinary blend of colors and contours.

Next, we'll backtrack a bit to well-named Surprise Canyon, one of the Anza-Borrego country's most rewarding arroyos. □

Mountain Palm Springs: North Grove Log

- 0.0 Junction of San Diego County Road S2 and good dirt road to Mountain Palm Springs Primitive Camp in southern part of Anza-Borrego Desert Park. This junction is one mile south of turnoff to Indian Gorge and Valley. Turn right and drive to primitive camp.
- 0.6 Dirt road ends at primitive camp at base of Tierra Blanca Mountains. Hike up the arroyo entering campground from the right to Mary's Grove, which is visible from end of road. Just beyond uppermost palm in Mary's Grove, the arroyo curves to left. Follow it for another quarter of a mile to North Grove. Total hiking distance from campground approximately two-thirds of a mile. Elevation at North Grove 960 feet.

a closer inspection reveals that it bends to the left beyond the uppermost palm. For a few feet, rocks clog the channel, which looks unpromising indeed. Within one-quarter mile, however, the narrow

A Canyon Called Muley Twist

by ROGER MITCHELL

MULEY TWIST Canyon is one of those out of the way and forgotten corners of the West that you would pass right on by if you didn't know it was there. And like many of these back-road places, you would be somewhat poorer for your ignorance. This is particularly true for Muley Twist Canyon. It offers the back-country enthusiast a grand view of the geologically famous Waterpocket Fold, a notable landform in South Central Utah.

Capitol Reef National Park is a colorful and geologically fascinating area, yet it is largely overlooked by the hordes of tourists who annually swarm by the mil-

lions to Yellowstone, Yosemite and the more "famous" parks. Capitol Reef is a "quiet park" where the visitor can often find solitude aplenty.

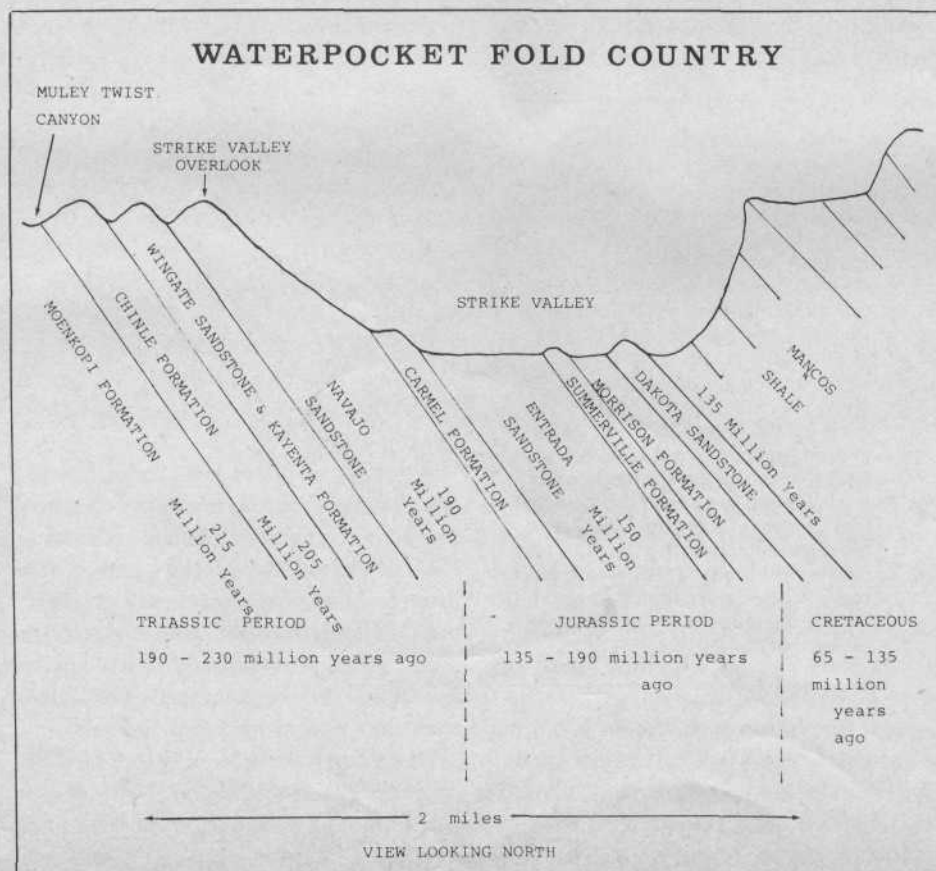
Muley Twist Canyon is in the southern end of Capitol Reef National Park. It is entirely open to hikers and the first two and one-half miles are accessible to motor vehicles, although four-wheel-drive is usually needed to negotiate the twisting sandy wash. To find the canyon you can take the "Burr Trail" (see *Desert*, June 1977) going east out of Boulder, Utah, or you can take the Bullfrog Marina Road, which heads south from State Route 24 between Park Headquar-

ters and Caineville. Both roads are graded dirt, and except for brief periods after summer or winter storms, are open all year round. The start of Muley Twist Canyon is 33 miles east of Boulder, or 35 miles south of State Route 24.

A National Park Service sign points to the proper turnoff. A pair of tracks go north across a small juniper-ringed flat, then start up the bottom of a sandy wash in Muley Twist Canyon. The colorful rocks here are part of the Moenkopi formation, deposited in the bottom of a shallow sea during the early part of the Triassic period some 225 million years ago. As you can see, the once horizontal layers have subsequently been thrust upward so they now rest at an acute angle. The strata here is like looking at a cross-section of a book, and the Moenkopi is but one brief chapter. As you look eastward, each successive layer of strata is younger than the one before it.

After winding up the wash two and one-half miles, a small sign points to the right where a foot trail of less than a mile leads out to Strike Valley Overlook. The spectacular view is well worth the short walk. From your vantage point on top of this ridge, the geologic heart of the Waterpocket Fold is exposed. From the top of this ridge to the top of the ridge across the valley, some seven geologic formations representing 100 million years of the earth's antiquity are exposed.

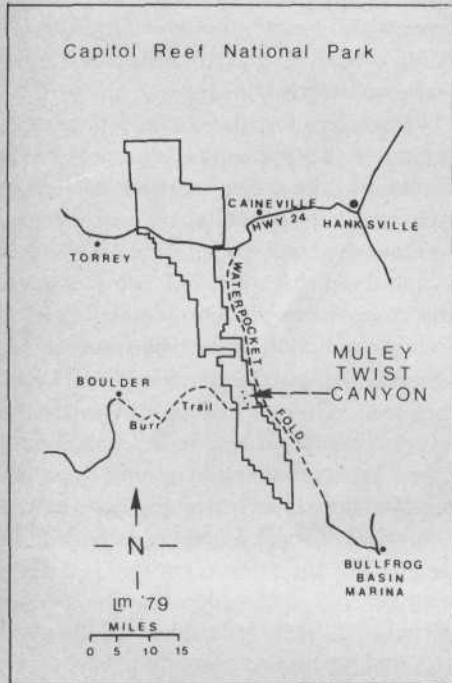
When you leave your car in the wash, you are in the Moenkopi formation. As you start hiking on the trail, you first cross the Chinle formation, the Kayenta sandstone, and finally the Navajo sandstone at the viewpoint. Just below in the valley you can see the thin red band of the Carmel formation, followed by the



Entrada sandstone, the Summerville formation, the Morrison formation, and finally on the other side, the Mancos shale. Still farther east, on the distant skyline, is the ominous and foreboding massif of the Henry Mountains. All of these rock layers are common throughout the Colorado Plateau Country, so the strata themselves are not unique. What does make them different here, however, is that fact that they are tilted upward. Usually these formations are lying flat. You might have to drive many miles to work your way up from the Moenkopi to the Mancos formations. But here, in less than two miles, they are all exposed from a single vantage point. It is like seeing the ends of all the pages in a book, not just looking down on one single page at a time.

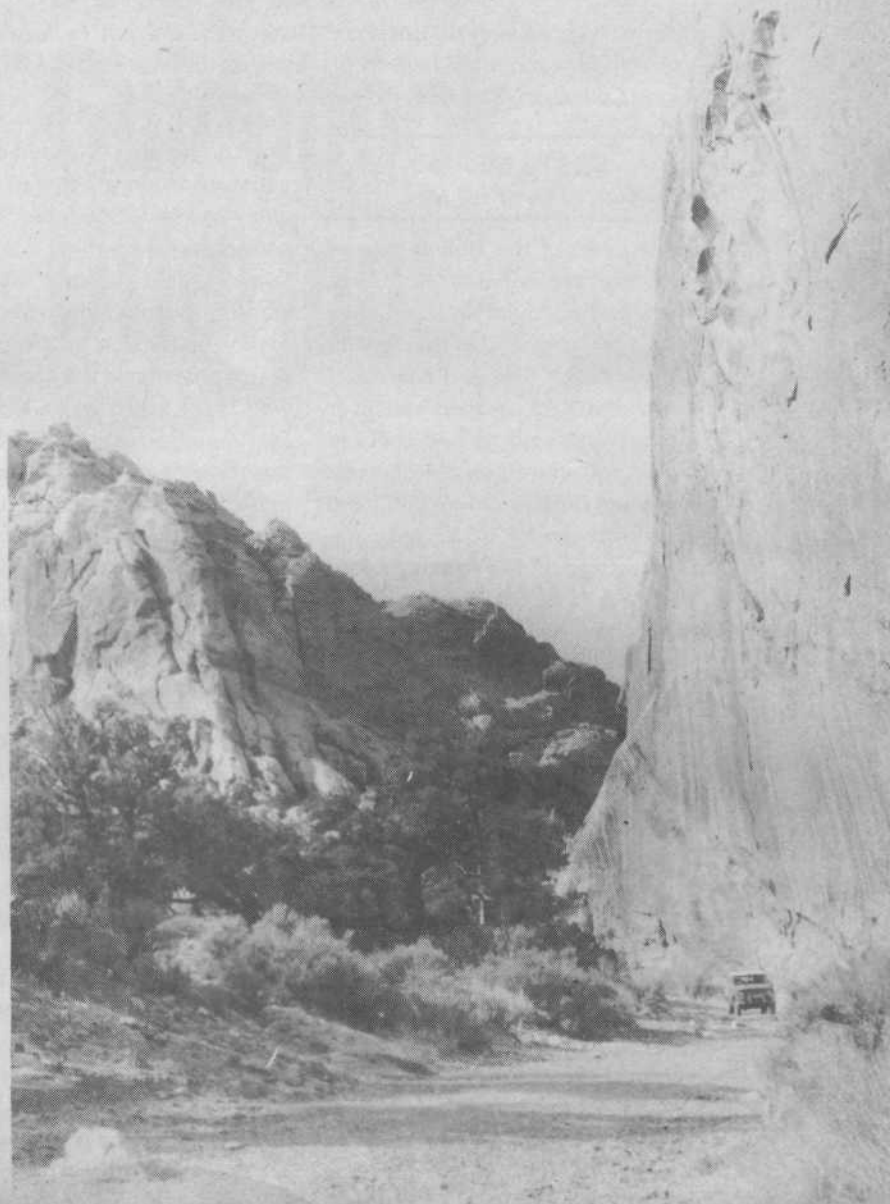


Above:
The Strike
Valley
Overlook.
Right:
Muley
Twist
Canyon.



Just beyond the foot trail to Strike Valley Overlook, the National Park Service prohibits vehicles from going any farther up Muley Twist Canyon. This should not stop those willing to walk. There is very little change in elevation and hiking in the wash bottom is easy. Saddle Arch is one and one-half miles up the canyon from the end of the four-wheel-drive road. And beyond Saddle Arch, there are three more natural arches in the next one and one-half miles.

The next time your travels take you through Central Utah, stop and visit Capitol Reef National Park, and of course, take a geologic journey back through time in Muley Twist Canyon. □





Bob Waterman, grandson of Governor Waterman, did not believe the Lost Lee ledge existed. Photographed here in his home at the Waterman Mill, about 1956. Burr Beldon Collection, San Bernardino Westerners' Corral.

LOST LEE

Continued from Page 11

put it in the heart of the Bullion Mountains—and the present Marine Corps Base. There he had found an abandoned shaft, an old arrastre, and in the vicinity a boulder inscribed "Lee and Marcus." Ore samples he had assayed ran over \$1000 a ton. Gibbs said he had checked the location "with the claim of Robert E. Lee, filed in San Bernardino in 1897, and found it to correspond."

With no record of bonanza developments in that part of the Bullions later, there might be a question of whether Gibbs had found a lost mine or was seeking a gullible mine buyer.

Since then the legend has trended toward a Lee, usually Robert, and the 1890s. In 1952 another hunter, who thought the Lost Lee was a mine and two stamp mills he had found in a San Bernardino Mountains canyon, also offered specifics. He went to county officials and found a mine location made by a man named Lee in 1890, and a record of his death three years later due to having been shot. So it goes.

However, Howard D. Clark, who published several stories of the Lost Robert

Lee Ledge, also disposed of it to his own satisfaction. In a letter to *Desert Magazine*, April, 1965, he said: "Please scratch one lost mine . . . A man who knew I had written about the Lee workings wanted me to see it. There was a short extension of the scarred old arrastre post above the sands. Down in the wall of the gulch was a small tunnel. He even found a rusted metal box which was buried by a large bush and in it was a mass of wads of material. He sent this to the U. S. Treasury and was informed that it was the residue of gold certificates, but not redeemable . . . Yes, the ore was gold and the place is 'out from Old Woman Springs.' Evidence is conclusive that this is the site of the Lee lode."

Well, perhaps the Lost Lee should be scrapped by now—but for reasons other than the one Clark offered. No tunnel or arrastre were part of any legend of George Lee's Lost Ledge. Certainly George's ledge produced no wads of gold certificates. Lost mine hunters can keep looking for the original Lost Lee.

That is, if they can decide where to look, and if the area is not closed off.

A pivotal question in the solution of the Lost Lee puzzle is whether the White

Metal claim really was George's rich strike. Burr Belden's computation, based on Lee's filing and the location of the Lone Star mine, placed the White Metal about ten miles northeast of Baldwin Lake. That would put it at the northeastern edge of the San Bernardinos, south-east of Old Woman Springs. No producing mines are of record there.

But was George Lee, while seeking the legal protection of a recorded claim, deceptive on the mileage or compass direction? To misgive the mileage would not invalidate his claim, and it might throw potential claim jumpers completely off the track. Go another ten miles in the same direction and you are close to the Los Padres, one of the Dry Lake District's most productive mines. Go another five and you are near Earl Ames' Desert King mine. You can't go that last five miles today, though. The Desert King is well within the Marine Corps Base boundaries.

With every lost mine, there is always the possibility that while the search for it continues, the ledge actually has been rediscovered—knowingly or unknowingly—and worked under another name. What about the Lost Lee? Some believe the claim name, White Metal, is proof George found silver. But he was mighty literal in naming claims. The Pencil Lead rock looked to him like pencil lead. Was any ore besides silver found in the Dry Lake District that would qualify as white metal? There is an intriguing possibility.

In 1969, Robert E. Ames published a fascinating little book entitled, "I Remember . . ." in which he recalled his early life in San Bernardino and the deserts and mountains. Among the most interesting recollections are those of his father, Earl. Earl Ames was a stone mason and bricklayer by trade, a life-long prospector and miner by choice, whenever possible. According to Charles Mecham, Ames built the earliest adobes in Calico, the first of which became a saloon.

Around 1900, Ames discovered the Desert King, a few miles east of Emerson Dry Lake. He is remembered there today by the place name Ames Well. As a boy, Robert Ames went with his father to work the King. Traveling with a heavily loaded wagon pulled by two large burros, it took four days to reach the mine. The first night's camp was near the summit of Cajon Pass, the second at

Victorville, the third at Old Woman Springs, and on the fourth day they reached their little stone cabin at the mine.

The King shaft was thirty feet deep. The vein was in a granite and porphyry formation which was very hard. The vein was narrow, and lost value as they went down. Young Ames cranked the windlass and brought up the rock his father blasted out. Then his father would sort and sack it.

And this is Robert's description of the ore as he remembered it: "The ledge of gold-bearing ore was called 'Silvernite' and averaged \$1600 per ton. My father would always bring in several hundred pounds of high grade ore. He would ship it to the mill and would always get a check back for several hundred dollars."

I have not been able to identify Silvernite. However, there is the rich telluride of gold and silver called Sylvanite which easily could run to \$1600 a ton. Comparatively rare, it is usually associated with igneous rock and commonly in deposits formed in the upper zone of the earth's crust. It has not been reported from the Dry Lake District, but is found in California.

Its color is silver-white to steel gray. Its luster is brilliant, metallic.

If the ore Lee found was Sylvanite, whether in the Ames claim or elsewhere, it would explain why he called it the White Metal. If it was worth \$1600 a ton and Lee's San Bernardino friends saw as-says, it would explain why such a determined search was made for the ledge.

So—is the Lost Lee silver, gold or Sylvanite? Was it rediscovered and worked out in the Dry Lake District? Does it lie, still hidden, in some canyon of the San Bernardinos?

Or did Robert W. Waterman III have the real answer? Bob Waterman still lived in what had been the Waterman mill assay office when we first visited his grandfather's mine in 1950. By that time Bob had spent too much time trying to counter and correct the misrepresentations and falsehoods in the continuing crop of Lost Lee stories.

"There never was a Lost Lee," he told us. "A prospector will hit a pocket and bring in his ore, and he's a big shot as long as that lasts. He tells how big his mine is. And probably there's no more ore there. It's a 'lost mine' not only because he can't find it—it isn't there." □



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
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What's Cooking on the Desert?

by STELLA HUGHES

Corn Bread!

 HERE'S AN old saying, "What ever will satisfy hunger is good food." Now, just think about that for a moment. I'll wager the meal you remember best was very simple fare. Right?

The meal I'll never forget was prepared in camp, after a day of riding the rugged Salt River Canyon country in Arizona. Spring, that year, had settled in like a nervous bride, and April saw chill winds howling down the canyon. After ten hours in the saddle, a cold mashed potato sandwich would have tasted like pure ambrosia.

Instead, we warmed up left-over pinto beans and made a Dutch oven of corn bread. The steaming bread, browned to a golden hue on top with a crunchy crust on the bottom, made a perfect "pusher" to roundup the last tender beans on our plates.

Maybe it was like an old Mexican *cocinero* once told me, "When I'm hungry, I'm pretty damn good cook. When I'm not hungry, I'm not ver-ee good cook."

Cornmeal is unique to the Americas, and corn should be a symbol of our country. Meal made from ground corn was

called Indian meal or Injun Corn. Different parts of our country have synonyms for just plain corn bread. There's hoe-cake, ashcake, johnnycake, corn dodger, corn pone, spoonbread, Indian slapjacks and corn fritters. There are a lot more, such as Hush Puppies, Hopi *piki* and the Mexicans have *masa* used mostly for making corn tortillas. There's no end to the list and the New Englander, the Middle West, the Deep South, the Wild West and the Southwest all have their regional favorite breads made of cornmeal.

Remember, no matter what it's called, cornbread must be served piping hot and usually used as a "sopper-upper." Griddle cakes made from cornmeal are eaten with a fork and covered with hot buttered syrup.

Back in the early 1940s, my husband and I lived in the ancient village of Oraibi, on the Hopi Indian Reservation in northern Arizona. Here I saw *piki* bread made for the first time. Here also, is the only place I've ever seen the small, stubby, blue corn as raised by the Hopi farmers.

Traditionally, the midnight blue corn is ground for *piki* when used for ceremonies, and there are many during the year. The blue cornmeal was home

ground on ancient stone *metates* with smooth stone *manos*. The batter is made by pouring boiling water into the meal while stirring with a wooden spoon. Then cold water is added until the batter is a thin gruel. Finely sifted juniper ashes are added to give a special flavor. The ashes are made by burning the green foliage and not the wood. Some prefer greasewood ashes.

The Hopi women all had a *piki* stone. Most were of sandstone over two inches thick and placed a few inches above a cedar fire. The sandstone became smooth and shiny from use with mutton tallow used for greasing. Sitting alongside their smoky, cedar fire for hours, the women dip into the gruel, swiping with several graceful sweeps with the palm of their hand, the paper-thin bread baking in moments. No time is lost in peeling the sheet from the grill and rolling it up with sides tucked in. The finished roll is about the size of a corn cob and is as crisp as a potato chip. If you've ever made milk gravy, and after pouring from the skillet, the residue on the side drying and curling like tissue paper, gives you an idea how *piki* looks and feels.

Piki is still being made by the Pueblo Indians of Arizona and New Mexico, but the modern housewife grinds her corn, more often than not, with an electric grain grinder.

It's a long, long way from Hopi *piki* bread to New England johnnycake, but both derive their origin from ancient grown corn. Rhode Island's early history tells us johnnycake may have first been called journey cake, and as time passed became simply johnnycake.

The true Rhode Island johnnycake is made from white cornmeal, salt and water. Some add sugar, but the original recipes did not call for sugar. The dyed-in-the-wool New Englanders don't add sugar to their johnnycake even today.

Only the corn called *whitecap flint* is ground for making Rhode Island johnnycake. It must be stone ground and in the East you might find the meal for sale in supermarkets, gourmet stores or health food stores. Here in Arizona, I'd probably starve before I could find a pound of stone-ground *whitecap flint* cornmeal. However, it can be ordered from Kenyon Corn Meal Company, Usquepaugh, Rhode Island 02892. Write them for particulars.

Johnnycake

- 1½ cups stone ground white cornmeal
- 1½ cups boiling water
- 1½ tablespoons melted butter
- salt to taste
- milk

Mix cornmeal, salt (and sugar if desired). Add the boiling water and stir while pouring in a stream. Let batter stand a few moments, covered. Stir in the hot melted butter. If too thick to drop off a spoon easily, add a small amount of milk. Batter should be thicker than hot cake batter. Drop by tablespoons onto hot griddle. Grill must be hot and well greased. Use vegetable oil or bacon drippings. Then turn heat low. Cakes must cook five to seven minutes on each side until golden brown. Serve with hot syrup and butter.

Because I had only commercial white cornmeal, I decided to experiment, and made johnnycake from non-stone ground cornmeal. I don't care if the traditionalists throw their hands up in horror, the johnnycake was delicious. Since then I've made it when serving chilibeans for supper. This type white cornmeal johnnycake goes well with (brace yourself) turnip or beet greens and broiled pork chops. Just remember, johnnycake is not going to taste like cornbread made with eggs and baking powder. Instead, it has a satisfying, toasted corn flavor, different from anything baked in an oven.

Southern Style Buttermilk Corn Bread

Below the Mason and Dixon line, it is generally believed white corn is for folks and yellow corn for critters.

- 1 cup cornmeal (yellow or white)
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- ½ cup milk
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon soda
- 1 cup buttermilk
- ½ cup all purpose flour

Blend all dry ingredients in a bowl. Add milk and eggs. Beat well. Add hot butter. Mix and pour into well greased baking tin. Bake at 450 degrees about 25 minutes.



*Grinding corn
on metate.*

Mexican Sourdough Corn Bread

- 1 cup sourdough starter
- 1½ cups yellow cornmeal
- 1½ cups milk
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ cup melted shortening
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon soda
- 1 cup whole kernel corn (drained)
- ½ cup grated onion
- 1 cup grated Cheddar cheese
- 1 small can diced green chiles
- 1 small jar diced pimientos

Mix together sourdough starter, cornmeal, milk, eggs and sugar in large bowl. Stir in melted shortening, salt, soda, corn, onion, cheese, green chiles and pimientos. Pour into a two-inch-deep bread pan at least 8 x 10 inches. Bake at 400 degrees for 35 minutes. Cheese, plus

the corn makes this heavier, thus takes longer to bake.

Mexican corn bread goes well with frijoles and barbecue beef. It's almost a meal in itself and you'll find your guests passing up the main course of a dinner and taking seconds on this satisfying cornbread.

There's dozens of wonderful cornmeal recipes which space does not allow to include here. Old Fashioned Indian Pudding with fruit, which has absolutely nothing to do with Indians, is a great favorite with roundup cooks on the range. Then there's fried cornmeal mush served with sausages—that's something to write home about, not to mention crisp corn sticks, tamale pie and on and on until whole books could be written about corn and cornmeal cookery. □



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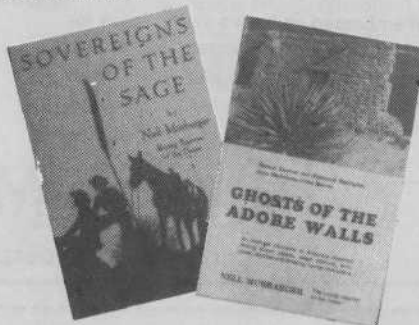
HIGH MOUNTAINS & DEEP VALLEYS by Lew and Ginny Clark, with photographs by Edwin C. Rockwell. A history and general guide book to the vast lands east of the High Sierra, south of the Comstock Lode, north of the Mojave Desert and west of Death Valley, by oldtimers who know the area and have since birth. Paperback, 192 pages, 250 photographs and many maps. \$6.95.

SHADY LADIES OF THE WEST by Ronald Dean Miller. Everyone knows that the harlot was the vanguard of every move westward, and that she was as much of a part of the western scene as the marshal, the badman, the trail-hand or the rancher. Many are the reasons she has been neglected by the historian—none of them valid. Author Miller, in this enlightening book, seeks to remedy some of the paucity of information on the American pioneers of this ancient profession. Hardcover, comprehensive bibliography, 224 pages, \$7.95.

FIELD GUIDE TO WESTERN BIRDS by Roger Tied Peterson. The standard book for field identification sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Second Edition, enlarged, 658 photos in full color. Strong, durable paperback, \$6.95.

GHOST TOWN: El Dorado by Lambert Florin. The colorful, outrageous characters of the Western mining towns come to life on every page of this fascinating volume crammed with photos of ghost towns in Colorado, California, Arizona, Utah, etc., plus exciting history and anecdotes. 246 photos and illustrations. Large format, hardcover, originally published at \$12.95, now priced at \$5.95.

ARIZONA TREASURE HUNTERS GHOST TOWN GUIDE by Theron Fox. Early maps of 1868 and 1881 show 1,200 place names, roads, forts, early county arrangements, mining districts, ghost towns, steamboat landing, mountain ranges, lakes, etc. A handy reference. Paperback, \$1.95.



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WILLIE BOY, by Harry Lawton. The story of an incomparable Indian chase, its unexpected conclusion, woven into an authentic turn-of-the-century history of California's Twentynine Palms country. This desert classic offers rare insights into Indian character and customs, as well as a first-hand look at a colorful desert region as it was nearly a century ago. Historic photographs and colorful maps, paperback, \$4.95.

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DESERT GEM TRAILS by Mary Frances Strong. *DESERT Magazine's* Field Trip Editor's popular field guide for rockhounds. The "bible" for both amateur and veteran rockhounds and back country explorers, and covers the gems and minerals of the Mojave and Colorado Deserts. Heavy paperback, 80 pages, \$2.00.

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GHOSTS OF THE ADOBE WALLS by Neil Murbarger. A reprint of Arizona history by one of the desert's outstanding reporters. Old mines, towns, army posts, people and areas are reborn into vivid life by an expert writer who knows her areas and subjects. With handy locator maps and many photographs. Paperback, \$7.95.

SOVEREIGNS OF THE SAGE by Neil Murbarger. A collection of previously told tales about the people and the places of the great American Southwest by the original author, a longtime reporter of the desert. Many photographs, some of them now lost, several excellent Norton Allen Maps. Paperback, \$7.95.

BAJA CALIFORNIA GUIDEBOOK by Wally Wheelock and Howard E. Gulick, formerly Gerhard and Gulick's *Lower California Guidebook*. This totally revised fifth edition is up-to-the-minute for the Transpeninsular paved highway, with new detailed mileages and descriptive text. Corrections and additions are shown for the many side roads, ORV routes, trails and little-known byways to desert, mountain, beach and bay recesses. Folding route maps are in color and newly revised for current accuracy. Indispensable reference guide, hardcover, \$10.50.

FORGOTTEN DESERT ARTIST, The Journals and Field Sketches of Carl Eytel, an early-day painter of the Southwest, by Roy F. Hudson. This is the story, primarily told in sketches, of an early and highly talented desert artist and naturalist, told by a distinguished educator of the Coachella Valley. Eytel's horseback and foot trips throughout the Indian Country of the Southwest made him a valuable early observer. Hard bound, 118 pages, many paintings and sketches, \$22.50.

GEM TRAILS OF ARIZONA by Bessie W. Simpson. This field guide is prepared for the hobbyist and almost every location is accessible by car or pickup accompanied by maps to show sandy roads, steep rocky hills, etc., as cautions. Laws regarding collecting on Federal and Indian land outlined. Paperback, 88 pages, illus., \$4.00.

WHERE TO FIND GOLD IN THE DESERT by James Klein is a sequel to *Where to Find Gold in Southern California*. Author Klein includes lost treasure tales and gem locations as he tells where to find gold in the Rosamond-Mohave area, the El Paso Mountains, Randsburg and Barstow areas, and many more. Paperback, 112 pages, \$3.95.

BAJA CALIFORNIA AND ITS MISSIONS by Tomas Robertson. This book is a must for all of those who are interested in the saga of the mission fathers and who may wish to visit those almost forgotten churches of the lonesome peninsula of Baja California. Paperback, 96 pages, illustrated with photos and maps, \$3.50.

THE WEST

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TRACKING DOWN OREGON, by Ralph Friedman. An excellent general history of California's northern neighbor, which has as much desert of a different description plus a lot of sea coast and exciting history. Many photographs of famous people and places and good directions how to get there. Paperback, 307 pages, more than 100 photographs, \$5.95.

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THE KING'S HIGHWAY IN BAJA CALIFORNIA by Harry Crosby. A fascinating recounting of a trip by muleback over the rugged spine of the Baja California peninsula, along an historic path created by the first Spanish padres. It tells of the life and death of the old Jesuit missions. It describes how the first European settlers were lured into the mountains along the same road. Magnificent photographs, many in color, highlight the book. Hardcover, 182 pages, large format, \$14.50.

TEMALPAKH by Lowell John Bean and Katherine Siva Saubel. Temalpakh means "from the earth," in Cahuilla, and covers the many uses of plants used for food, medicine, rituals and those used in the manufacturing of baskets, sandals, hunting tools; and plants used for dwellings. Makes for a better understanding of environmental and cultural relationships. Well illustrated, 225 pages, hardcover, \$10.00.

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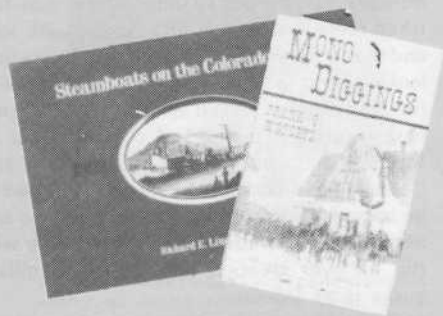
OWYHEE TRAILS by Mike Hanley and Ellis Lucia. The authors have teamed to present the boisterous past and intriguing present of this still wild corner of the West sometimes called the I-O-N, where Idaho, Oregon and Nevada come together. Hardcover, 225 pages, \$9.95.

CALIFORNIA GHOST TOWN TRAILS by Mickey Broman. Thirty-six photographs showing some of the old towns as they appear today, not as they did 50 or 100 years ago. Thirty-six maps with detail mileage to the ghost towns, shown to the tenth of a mile. Interesting and historical data for treasure hunters, rockhounds, bottle collectors and western-lore enthusiasts. Paperback, \$2.95.

WILDLIFE OF THE SOUTHWEST DESERTS by Jim Cornett. Written for the layman and serious students alike, this excellent book on all the common animals of the Southwest deserts. A must for desert explorers, it presents a brief life history of everything from ants to burros. Paperback, 80 pages, illustrated, \$3.95.

CALIFORNIA-NEVADA GHOST TOWN ATLAS and SOUTHWESTERN GHOST TOWN ATLAS by Robert Neil Johnson. These atlases are excellent do-it-yourself guides to lead you back to scenes and places of the early West. Some photos and many detailed maps with legends and bright, detailed descriptions of what you will see; also mileage and highway designations. Heavy paperback, each contains 48 pages, each \$2.00.

JEEP TRAILS TO COLORADO GHOST TOWNS by Robert L. Brown. An illustrated, detailed, informal history of life in the mining camps deep in the almost inaccessible mountain fastness of the Colorado Rockies. 58 towns are included as examples of the vigorous struggle for existence in the mining camps of the West. Illustrated, 239 pages, end sheet map, paperback, \$6.95.



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SPEAKING OF INDIANS by Bernice Johnston. An authority on the Indians of the Southwest, the author has presented a concise, well-written book on the customs, history, crafts, ceremonies and what the American Indian has contributed to the white man's civilization. A MUST for both students and travelers touring the Indian Country. Heavy paperback, illus., \$2.95.

THE SEA OF CORTEZ, The Gulf of California, Baja, and Mexico's Mainland Coast by Ray Cannon and the Sunset Editors. A rich and colorful text acquaints the traveler and outdoorsman with the history, people, climate and travel opportunities of this exciting wonderland. Each of the 12 regions that make up the Gulf of California is covered in a separate chapter with a special section on how to catch "Cortez fishes." Large format, hardcover, 272 pages, \$14.95.

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DEATH VALLEY IN '49, by William Lewis Manly. The newest reprint of a Death Valley classic, written by one of the heroes of its most tragic period, with a new foreword by the superintendent of the Death Valley National Monument. Paperback, 498 pages, \$8.95.

NEVADA PLACE NAMES by Helen S. Carlson. The sources of names can be amusing or tragic, whimsical or practical. In any case, the reader will find this book good reading as well as an invaluable reference tool. Hardcover, 282 pages, \$15.00.

ARIZONA PLACE NAMES by Will C. Barnes, Revised and enlarged by Byrd H. Granger. Excellent reference book with maps, Biographical Information and Index. Large format, hardcover, 519 pages, \$11.50.

LAND OF POCO TIEMPO by Charles F. Lummis. A reprint of the famous writer and historian of his adventures among the Indians of New Mexico. Lummis was one of the foremost writers of the West. Paperback, 236 pages, \$3.95.

CALIFORNIA DESERT WILDFLOWERS by Philip A. Munz. Illustrated with both line drawings and beautiful color photos, and descriptive text by one of the desert's finest botanists. Paperback, \$3.95.

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FIELD GUIDE TO ANIMAL TRACKS by Olaus J. Murie [Peterson Field Guide Series]. This comprehensive book helps you recognize and understand the signs of all mammals—wild and domestic—on this continent, as well as those of many birds, reptiles and insects. More than 1000 drawings; individual tracks, different track patterns, animals in their habitats, droppings, gnawed trees—all the types of clues the tracker needs. Strong, durable paperback, \$5.95.

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DESERT EDITOR by J. Wilson McKenney. This is the story of Randall Henderson, founder of DESERT Magazine, who fulfilled a dream and who greatly enriched the lives of the people who love the West. Hardcover, illustrated with 188 pages, \$7.95.

RAILROADS OF ARIZONA VOL. I by David F. Myrick. More than 30 railroads of Southern Arizona are presented, together with 542 nostalgic illustrations, 55 special maps and an Index. A valuable travel guide and a reliable historical reference. Large format, hardcover, 477 pages, \$19.50.

Letters to the Editor

Letters requesting answers must
include stamped self-addressed envelope

No Sense to Jim Dollar . . .

I put this off a long time, but since I am now retired, I feel an obligation to set a few things straight while I am still on this side of the river.

In the June, 1964 issue of *Desert Magazine*, there was a nice story about Ken Marquiss and the Jim Dollar Lost Gold Ledge or Mine. Please find enclosed four pictures: the road, the hill from a distance, the nose on the hill, like he said (humped hogback with a point like a turned-up nose on the north end, lies roughly N&S. And you would be facing about E, SE. As you travel the nose should be on your left), and photo no. 4, the hill and the nose from the other side looking SW. I must congratulate the man on his directions—right on the ball.

Also on page 11, he says . . . "stand on the RR tacks at Danby and the easterly straight line at right angles to the tracks is your 'Walking Line' and if you look out the east door of a box car at Danby, you'll be looking square at a million bucks." Right again, except for the million bucks.

I located the Jim Dollar Lode Mine—recorded December 16, 1974. It is in the Little Piute Mountains, just north of the Old Woman Mountains, and right on "the walking line."

The pale butterscotch rock (what the rockhounds left) was still there stuck in the rock

up at the point, but the entire hill had been mined to a fare-thee-well and they made a good job of it. All the gold-bearing quartz on the east side was ripped out. It was a peculiar formation. The east side is like a wall and the quartz was plastered up against it, also on the point where some of the butterscotch was still in place in 1973 when I first saw it.

Down below the point is a little wash, "he says!" It ain't a little wash anymore. It's at least 25 feet wide and it runs past the point under the "nose" and goes past the east side of the hill running south thereafter.

I had a mine in the Clipper Mountains just west of Danby and lived there for three years. It's a well known fact that in the '30s the entire area—Turtle Mountains, Old Woman Mountains, Ship Mountains, Little Piutes, Sacramentos—all were prospected and mined thoroughly. Near Goffs you will find the Von-trigger Diggings, some of the biggest old mines in San Berdoo County. When they finished there was nary a fifty cents worth left, and that's the way it was when Marquiss quit looking for it in 1935. What they didn't get in the '20s, they finished in the '30s. When I first spotted it in 1973, I passed it up as "worked out," but when I read about the Jim Dollar, I went back thinking there still had to be something left. I just wasted my time and money. My best advice to all the people who run all over creation looking for a million bucks is as follows:

The "old-timers" miners knew more about prospecting and finding gold than you will ever know. And as for "looking out the east door of a box car at Danby," don't look for any at Danby. There isn't any more Danby. The entire railroad station, siding, water tank, buildings, etc., are gone—25 years ago.

Ken's advice about old unexploded ammunition is quite right. There is still some of it there plus a lot of tank tracks leading nowhere. They told a story about a tank that was disabled and abandoned out there. If somebody finds it, that might make a pretty good Jim Dollar at the scrap yard.

A. M. ZWEYER,
San Pedro, California.

West side of hill.

Calendar of Events

This column is a public service and there is no charge for listing your event or meeting—so take advantage of the space by sending in your announcement. We must receive the information at least three months prior to the event.

JUNE 2 & 3, 13th Annual Rockatomics Gem and Mineral Show, 8500 Fallbrook Ave., Canoga Park, California. Exhibits, dealers, Demonstrations. Admission and parking free.

JUNE 9 & 10, Lassen Rocks & Minerals Society's 7th Annual Rocks, Minerals and Indian Artifacts Show, Jensen Hall, Fairgrounds, Susanville, Calif. 96130. Exhibits, tailgating, camping spaces for campers and trailers.

JUNE 22 & 23, 1979, Reunion of men who served in the states and South Pacific with the 417th Bomb Group. Contact Glenn Clark, 1705 Bradley St., Bossier City, LA 71112.

JUNE 30-JULY 4, 50th Annual All-Indian Pow Wow, Flagstaff, Arizona. The five-day program will provide a medley of attractions. Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, Apache, Papago, Cheyenne and Kiowa will participate along with Indian visitors whose tribal homes are scattered throughout the United States and Mexico. For information on accommodations, etc., contact the Pow Wow Wranglers, c/o Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce, 101 W. Santa Fe, Flagstaff, Ariz. 86001. Be wise and make reservations early.

JULY 13-15, "Filer Gem and Mineral Show" in Filer, Idaho. Demonstrations, dealers, exhibits. Free public parking and admission.

JULY 14 & 15, Reno Gem and Mineral Society's Annual "Jackpot of Gems '79" Show. V. & T. Room, Centennial Coliseum, 4590 S. Virginia St., Reno, Nevada.

JULY 20-22, First annual "Cinco de las Flores" Flower show and plant sale, Agricultural Building, Ventura County Fair Grounds, Ventura, Calif. Categories: African Violets, Begonias, Bonsai, Fuschias and Orchids. This will be a judged show. Donation, \$1. Free parking on Fair Grounds.

JULY 20-AUGUST 26, Art-A-Fair Festival, Boy's Club, 1085 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna, Calif., featuring fine artists and craftspersons. For information, write to P. O. Box 547, Laguna Beach, Calif. 92652.

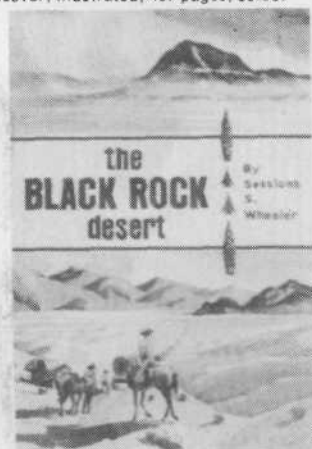


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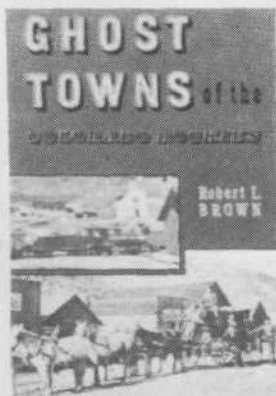
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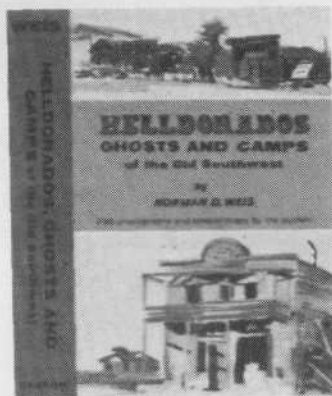
THE OREGON DESERT by E. R. Jackson and R. A. Long. Filled with both facts and anecdotes, this is the only book on the little but fascinating deserts of Oregon. Anyone who reads this book will want to visit the area—or wish they could. Hardcover, illustrated, 407 pages, \$9.95.



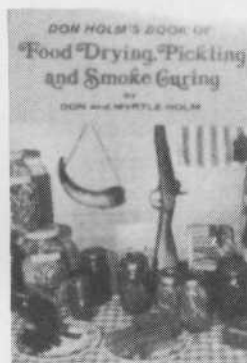
THE BLACK ROCK DESERT by Sessions S. Wheeler. One of Nevada's least-known and most scenic historical desert areas is described by the state's leading professional historian and author. Paperback, illus., maps, \$4.95.



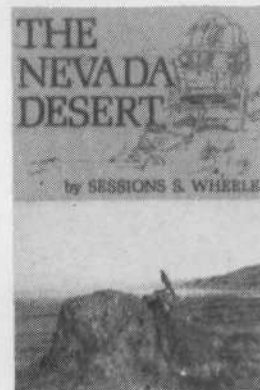
GHOST TOWNS OF THE COLORADO ROCKIES by Robert L. Brown. Written by the author of "Jeep Trails to Colorado Ghost Towns," this book deals with ghost towns accessible by passenger car. Gives directions and maps for finding towns along with historical backgrounds. Hardcover, 401 pages, \$9.95.



HELLDORADOS, GHOSTS AND CAMPS OF THE OLD SOUTHWEST by Norman D. Weis. The author takes you on a 7,000-mile tour of the Old Southwest, visiting some 67 ghost towns and abandoned mining camps, one never before mentioned in written history. 285 excellent photos. Hardcover, 320 pages, \$9.95.



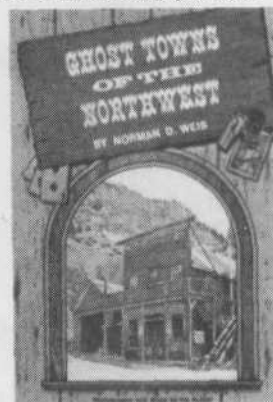
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GHOST TOWNS OF THE NORTHWEST by Norman D. Weis. The ghost-town country of the Pacific Northwest, including trips to many little-known areas, is explored in this first-hand factual and interesting book. Excellent photography, maps. Hardcover, 319 pages, \$9.95.

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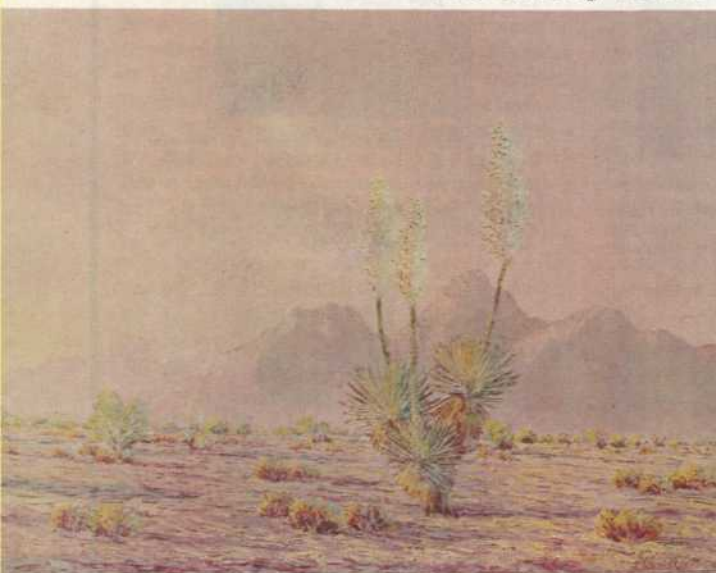
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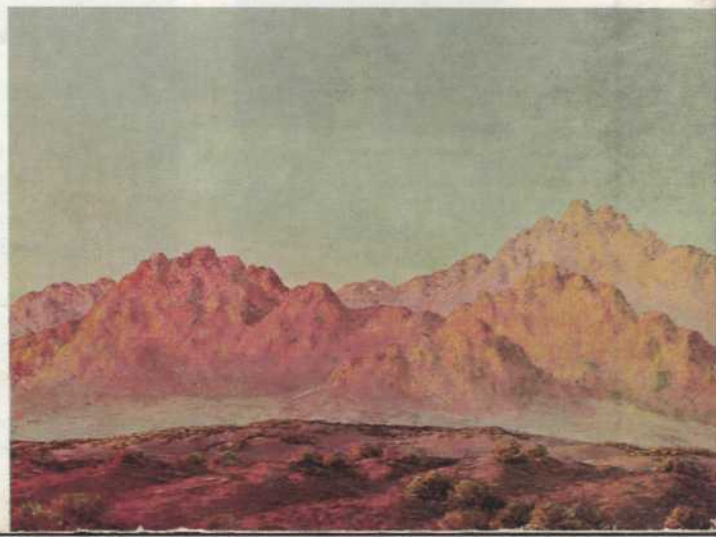
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ence it is the richer of the two"

Although Lee's Pencil Lead mine, mentioned by Delameter, was never a lost mine, it and Robert W. Waterman are inextricably entangled with the Lost Lee. The first wide circulation of the story occurred on October 22, 1886, when it was spread across half the front page of the San Francisco *Examiner*. Not as a lost mine story. It was an attempt, two weeks before the general election, to defeat Waterman, Republican candidate for Lieutenant-Governor, by linking him with Lee's disappearance and possible murder. As such, every sentence is suspect. But this account of Lee and his disappearance sounds factual:

"George Lee was a quiet, unobtrusive man of about 50 years of age. He lived here (San Bernardino) for many years and was known by most of our citizens. He had prospected various parts of the country for mines and had taken up several claims, some of which were supposed to be of great value. For years he had been in the habit of going to his claims every few weeks or months to work them. He frequently went alone. To one of them, which he regarded as his best, he invariably went secretly. He exhibited specimens from it of marvelous richness, but its location he revealed to no one, and it is to this day unknown.

"My story, however, related especially to one of his claims commonly known as 'Lee's mine,' or 'Lee's quicksilver

Lost mine hunters believe that the Lost Lee was richer than George Lee's Pencil Lead claim [the Waterman Mine] where the silver vein [right] was gouged out hundreds of feet into the mountain. Burr Belden advanced theory that the Lost Dutch Oven mine, believed to be in the Clipper Mountains [below], might be the ledge George Lee found. 1950 photos by Harold O. Weight.

